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University of London School of Librarianship  
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Edited with an introduction by  
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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
I THE BRITISH MUSEUM	10
By F. C. Francis, M.A., F.S.A.	
II THE LIBRARY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY) AND SOME OTHER LIBRARIES OF NATURAL HISTORY	27
By A. C. Townsend, M.A.	
III SCIENCE MUSEUM LIBRARY	42
By D. J. Urquhart, Ph.D.	
IV THE LIBRARY OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM	48
By A. W. Wheen	
V THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE AND ITS WORK	55
By Sir Hilary Jenkinson, C.B.E., F.S.A.	
VI THE PATENT OFFICE LIBRARY	92
By F. W. Gravell, F.L.A.	
VII THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY	107
By N. W. Wilding	
VIII THE LIBRARY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS	111
By Charles T. Clay, C.B.	
IX GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES	115
By D. W. King, F.L.A.	
X THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON LIBRARY AND SOME OTHER LIBRARIES OF THE UNIVERSITY	125
By J. H. P. Pafford, M.A., F.L.A.	
XI THE BRITISH LIBRARY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE	139
By G. Woledge, B.A., A.L.A.	
XII THE LONDON LIBRARY	150
By C. J. Purnell, M.A.	

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII THE LAW LIBRARIES OF LONDON By A. R. Hewitt	160
XIV LONDON'S MEDICAL LIBRARIES By W. R. Le Fanu, M.A.	174
XV THE GUILDHALL LIBRARY By Raymond Smith, F.S.A., F.L.A.	185
XVI THE LONDON BOROUGH LIBRARIES By James D. Stewart, M.B.E., F.L.A.	194
XVII THE NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY By S. P. L. Filon, B.Sc., F.L.A.	204
BIBLIOGRAPHY	219
INDEX	225

## INTRODUCTION

Forty years ago Reginald Arthur Rye published his *Students' guide to the libraries of London*. A second edition appeared in 1909, and a third edition revised and enlarged in 1927. This great work of nearly six hundred pages quickly established itself as one of the fundamental textbooks of librarianship. It is now unfortunately out of print.

This present work will supplement Rye's book and bring it up to date in some respects. There is no intention that it should replace Rye. Such an aim would indeed be inappropriate. *The students' guide* might well be revised again, but it does not need to be superseded at this early stage. The historical introduction which occupies the seventy pages of Rye's first chapter still stands as a masterly essay on the growth of librarianship in general and of London's libraries in particular, while the remainder of his book contains much historical material which will always retain its value. In the last twenty years, however, the waters of London's river have been flowing steadily out to sea. Many things have happened to change the face of librarianship in London. New libraries have sprung up to meet new needs. Older libraries have developed and adapted themselves. Conditions of service and training have improved. A great war has intervened, damaging many libraries and dislocating the work of all. Partly as a result of the war, we are witnessing a reorganization of industry, a great expansion of scientific research, and a wide extension of university training, which will make necessary to an even greater degree the organized development of industrial, scientific and academic libraries during the coming years.

The foreword to Rye's book opens with the statement that London is the largest and most important library centre in the world. This is still true today, for neither Paris, New York nor Moscow can offer any serious rivalry to London's pre-eminence in this respect. It is perhaps idle to compare the bibliographical wealth of different places; but when one surveys the resources that are available for the student within a narrow radius around Bloomsbury; when further, one remembers that only fifty miles away lie those two other treasure houses of Cambridge University and the Bodleian, one can feel

nothing but wonder at the wealth that is gathered into this small corner of the world.

This kind of wealth cannot be represented quantitatively by figures. The number of books gathered together in London for the use of students can be computed in millions; but in astronomical reckonings of this type, figures tend to lose their significance for the human mind. Moreover, no figures can indicate the quality of the treasures they represent, or the way in which they are disposed for use. The books in a library are not like so many coins in a bank, each with its value engraved upon it. The value of a book is to be assessed not merely by its title and subject, and it may vary from day to day according to the purpose of the readers who wish to consult it. The value of a library, therefore, is relative to the needs of those who use it, and it can be assessed only by a study of the way in which their needs are being met. Even a statistical survey of readers' tastes and requirements can tell us very little, for neither librarianship nor bibliography are quantitative sciences, and readers can only be grouped in classes at the sacrifice of their individuality. Those who wish to assess the value of a library or a system of libraries must first study the history and purpose of the library; secondly, they must use it and work in it themselves for a reasonable period. Only by some method such as this can they estimate to what extent its purposes are being fulfilled, and how it is justifying itself. One object of this book is to assist such an inquiry by describing the story and functions of some of the great libraries of London. Those whose interest is thereby attracted are advised to go forward to the second step, and to test them by experience. This plea is addressed not only to the student but to the professional librarian from other libraries; too often in administering libraries of our own, we forget the other side of the picture—the art and joy of using a library ourselves, as an ordinary lay student would use it. It is both a salutary and happy experience, and there is indeed no other way of forming a true judgment of the merits of a library.

There are in the Greater London area between 600 and 700 libraries of standing, available to the student. This is an imposing figure, but it has no pretensions to accuracy, being in fact an underestimate. There are many small special libraries which may or may not be included in the total, according to one's purpose. Some, though they do useful work in their own narrow sphere, hardly merit inclusion on account of their limited resources. Some are so loosely

administered that they hardly deserve the title of an organized library. Some, though private in theory, are open to the properly accredited student. A very few are for special reasons wholly private, and cannot properly be included for this reason.

It is not the intention of this present book to provide a complete guide to all these libraries. This task was indeed attempted by Rye, but the field has expanded since his last edition. Moreover, brief details of all the more important libraries appear in the *Libraries, museums and art galleries year book*, of which a new edition is now available, and there is little need to duplicate them here.

In this work we are attempting something different. A number of the more important London libraries has been selected, and their history, functions, and aims have been described by their own librarians, or by members of their staffs. Let me forestall criticism by admitting that there are omissions in this group. Other libraries of equal importance (and who can compare the importance of one library with that of another ?) might well have been included. Various factors have influenced the choice, the most important being that the series was planned to cover a week's vacation course at the London School of Librarianship, and the number of lectures was therefore limited by the time available. We can, however, say that a representative selection of London's great libraries are here described ; and the gaps are to some extent filled by the fact that some of the chapters deal with groups of related libraries, rather than with single institutions. The main omission is perhaps that of the commercial and subscription libraries, which, though they were included by Rye, have been excluded from the present work owing to limitations of space. They form a distinct class, and a full study of their history would make a valuable contribution to our knowledge of London life and culture.

The libraries in the Greater London area may be very roughly analysed as follows :

National libraries, and the libraries of government departments	- - -	38
University, college, and other academic libraries, including medical school libraries	- - approx.	70
Municipal libraries, including 69 central libraries and 181 branch libraries	- - -	250
County libraries (full-time branches)	- -	49
Special libraries, other than those included above	approx.	220

In order to complete the picture of metropolitan library systems, it will be appropriate if I refer here to two other institutions which are not libraries though they are intimately bound up with the world of librarianship. The first is the London University School of Librarianship, and the second is the Library Association.

The School was established at University College, London, on the basis of suggestions made by the Library Association, and was opened by Sir Frederic Kenyon in 1919. The first Director was Dr. E. A. Baker, who was succeeded by J. D. Cowley in 1934. The School was closed in 1939 on the outbreak of war, and towards the end of the war J. D. Cowley resigned his post on receiving appointment as Goldsmiths' Librarian to the University of London. Shortly afterwards, by a cruel stroke of fate, he was killed while on active service with the R.A.F. He was a scholar, a librarian, and a bibliographer in the highest sense of each of those words. In addition, he had a gentle charm which won him friends everywhere. His influence in re-organizing and guiding the School during the five pre-war years will be felt for long, and those of us who are left to carry on in his stead know how much we owe to him. He, in turn, would have been the first to acknowledge the debt we all owe to Dr. Baker who steered the School through the difficult pioneer years.

The main purpose of the School has always been to train graduates for the library profession. A diploma in librarianship is offered by the University, and the normal course covers at least one year. In pre-war days, a limited number of non-graduates were also admitted for a two-years' course, but this has now been suspended. (A parallel diploma in archive administration was instituted in 1947.)

Before 1946, the School was the only full-time training institution for librarianship in Great Britain. The fact that it was largely a graduate school meant that the majority of its diplomates obtained posts in academic libraries. In earlier days, for a variety of reasons, public library authorities offered a very limited field for the trained graduate. This field is now widening, and vacancies await the graduate librarian in libraries of nearly every type. Salaries, though not high, are markedly better than in pre-war days; and as the number of applications for admission to the School is much higher than the number of places available, a rigorous selection is necessary. Circumstances such as these are increasing the confidence which library authorities place in the work of the School. The day of the

untrained librarian is over ; practically all libraries of standing now require that at least their senior staff should be fully trained.

The graduate diploma course is largely technical in nature, the emphasis being on the subject of bibliography, in its widest aspects. Individual bibliographical work is required as part of the examination, and a year's practical work is necessary before the award of the diploma. There is opportunity for specialization in particular fields, such as palaeography or historical bibliography, and a course in special librarianship (documentation, information work, etc.) is included. A parallel diploma course in archive administration is also offered by the School for those proposing to work in record offices.

The average number of full-time students is about seventy, though it has risen on occasion rather higher than this. The School is glad to welcome each year a small number of overseas students, particularly from countries such as Norway and India ; over a large part of the world, the reputation of the University's diploma stands high. Part-time and occasional students are accepted for separate lecture courses.

The alternative means of entering the profession is by taking the examinations of the Library Association. Before 1946, there were no full-time courses in preparation for these, and the accepted method was to obtain a junior post in a library, and to study for examinations in one's spare time. In 1946 the Library Association revised its syllabus of examinations so as to make them more suited to full-time training, and arranged for the opening of a number of schools of librarianship in selected English and Scottish technical colleges. One of these is maintained by the London County Council, and a year's course in preparation for the Library Association Registration, or Final examinations is offered. There are now, therefore, two schools of librarianship in London, while, in addition, part-time courses are provided at various other technical institutions. The Library Association's ideal is that the major part of all professional training should be carried out on a full-time basis. This is not likely to be realized for some little time, but it is a worthy aim which should receive every encouragement. Equally important is the realization that, if full benefit is to be derived from specialized training courses, they must be built on the foundation of a good general education, and that this should mean in most cases a university education. There is reason to hope that, when the problem of accommodation at universities has been solved, no student who can benefit from such an



education will be denied it on financial grounds. Equally important again is the fact that if the best candidates are to be attracted to librarianship, the rewards must be commensurate with the qualifications expected. The position in this respect has vastly improved. At the top of the ladder there are now many appointments yielding £1,000 or £1,500 a year, though there are still many stagnant backwaters which lead nowhere. It is our responsibility to see that the improving conditions are maintained and extended throughout the profession.

In that isolated (but not always quiet) corner of Bloomsbury known as Malet Place, there lies immediately between University College and the National Central Library a building of pleasant and seemly aspect, known as Chaucer House. This is in a true sense the headquarters and citadel of British librarianship, for here are placed the offices, council chamber, library, and members' rooms of the Library Association. The National Central Library adjoins, and can be reached by a private doorway. The London University School of Librarianship and University College Library are across the way. The British Museum, the Senate House and the University Library are within two or three minutes' walking distance. Within the radius of half a mile, lie the great libraries belonging to a score or more national and academic institutions. Thus placed at the heart of things, it is the Piccadilly Circus of librarianship where sooner or later one meets everyone connected with libraries or bibliography.

The Association was founded in 1877 and received its royal charter in 1898. It has at present some seven or eight thousand members, and is the responsible national organization for all types of libraries. Its membership includes both authorities and staff. There are two points of interest regarding the Association which are worthy of note here. The first is that it is a cultural as well as a professional body. The wording of the charter makes this quite plain. It unites "all persons engaged or interested in library work, by holding conferences and meetings for the discussion of bibliographical questions and matters affecting libraries". One of its stated objects is to "promote and encourage bibliographical study and research". It is further charged with the duty of holding examinations in librarianship and issuing certificates of efficiency. The second point is that it brings together within one fold every form of librarianship and every type of librarian and bibliographer. The charge has sometimes been made that it has become mainly an association of public librarians

(i.e. the staffs of municipal and county libraries). This is not true, and if it were true, it would be a misfortune. By an accident of history, there have been occasions when public library matters have appeared to predominate in the council chamber and in its official journal. In the earlier days of the Association, public libraries were better organized than academic or special libraries; the special libraries indeed had hardly come into existence then as a distinct entity. In these circumstances, it was natural that a great part of the membership should consist of public librarians. In more recent days, both academic and special libraries have undergone a great development, and there is no doubt that in future they will take their rightful place in the work of the Association. There is indeed a separate body known as ASLIB (The Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux) concerned with the interests of special and scientific libraries, and a most valuable work it has done and is doing in fostering the interests of this new and important type of library and in the fields of special bibliography and documentation. All who have the good of librarianship at heart will hope and believe that these two bodies may in due time join forces. However this may be, one fact is certain. The founders of the Library Association never for one moment intended that the Association should be restricted to public librarians, nor has responsible opinion within the Association ever contemplated this. The terms of the charter leave no doubt about this. There is now a very strong section of the Association devoted to academic and research libraries, and it is likely that the influence and significance of this section will grow considerably. Every good librarian, whatever his library, realizes the importance of this.

The Library Association therefore is the national organization for librarianship as a whole in Great Britain, and it is appropriate that its headquarters should be in this small, crowded centre of bibliography and scholarship. Just as the British Museum and the National Central Library form the axis on which the bibliographical world revolves, so is Chaucer House the axis of professional librarianship.

Mention must be made of the library at Chaucer House, which has considerable importance as a special library in its own right. The library was founded in 1877 when the Association was formally constituted. For many years, however, its growth and use were small, largely because it had no permanent home of its own. It followed the Association about in its wanderings from place to place

till 1933, when Chaucer House was opened as the headquarters of the Association. During these years of migration, the Association owed much to friends for their care of the whole or part of the collection, in particular the librarians of Birmingham Public Library, the London School of Economics and University College, London.

The acquisition of Chaucer House made it possible to house and develop the library systematically, and to increase its usefulness to the profession. It aims at completeness in material on librarianship, with strong sections on bibliography, printing and allied subjects, and at present has a stock of nearly 10,000 volumes with many thousands of pamphlets, periodicals, illustrations, plans and other documents. It is primarily a research collection and does not normally supply textbooks to students reading for examinations. Apart from this restriction, however, most of its material may be borrowed by members. An information bureau is attached to the library. This deals with a great variety of inquiries from personal members, from government departments, the press, official organizations and libraries of every kind and from correspondents in all parts of the world, relating to library administration in all its aspects. It is true to say that there is no institution in the world better equipped to handle such inquiries. Both library and information bureau are administered by a competent staff of trained librarians. It should be emphasized that one of the main functions of the Association is research into the problems of librarianship and bibliography; and there is every reason to hope that, as the Association expands its membership and resources, it will become even better equipped to handle successfully this type of problem, and that as questions of professional training and service conditions become stabilized, more of its energies can be directed towards bibliographical research.

I must close this introduction by acknowledging my debts to many good friends who have helped me in the production of this book. First, of course, to the contributors who have so readily given their services for the vacation course during which these lectures were delivered, and have allowed their contributions to be printed in this work. By permission of the College, and by general agreement among the contributors, any profits from the sale of this book will be devoted in their entirety to the foundation of a prize for students at the School of Librarianship and Archives. Secondly, I must express my thanks to Mr. J. H. P. Pafford and his staff at the University Library, and in particular to Miss H. M. Gummer, F.L.A., who was

## INTRODUCTION

9

largely responsible for the compilation of the bibliography ; to Miss Mary Piggott, B.A., F.L.A. and to Mr. Ronald Staveley, B.A., F.L.A., for help with the index and the proofs ; and to Mr. D. Henrik Jones, F.L.A., for assistance and information in many ways.

R.I.

University College, London.

October, 1948.

## CHAPTER I

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM

By F. C. FRANCIS, M.A., F.S.A.

*Keeper in the Department of Printed Books*

The British Museum is the British National Library. It is the national deposit library, that is to say, it receives and preserves for public record, and endeavours to produce on demand, a copy of every piece of printed matter published in the United Kingdom ; it is also a public reference library, having as its objectives first the acquisition of all books in all languages likely to be required for reference and research by the scholars who use it, and second the production of catalogues and the arrangement of exhibitions to make the collections known.

It is not necessary to say anything of the history of the Museum. This is sufficiently well known to most librarians, and it has in any case been successfully dealt with by Dr. Arundell Esdaile, Secretary of the Museum from 1926 to 1940, in *The British Museum Library* (Library Association and Allen & Unwin, 1946). This work should also be referred to for a detailed account of the Museum collections. It is proposed in this chapter to give an account of the services which the Museum offers to the public and of its internal organization.

The collections of the Museum have been built up by gifts, by purchase and, most important of all, by the books acquired under the provisions of the Copyright Acts. The copyright privilege came to the Museum with the Royal Library in 1757, which had enjoyed the right to a copy of every book published since 1662, but it was only after the middle of the nineteenth century that the rights of the Museum were energetically enforced. Since the time of the great Principal Librarian, Sir Anthony Panizzi, acquisitions from this source have been progressively more complete. The Museum officials, moreover, have made great efforts to make good the gaps caused by imperfect observance of the Copyright Acts and to increase the resources of the library by wise purchases and by attracting gifts. One of the main principles of the buying policy has been, and is still, to acquire all English books and periodicals which are not represented in the collections.

The collection of English printed books is thus very large indeed. It includes some notable special collections: the Thomason collection of Civil War and Commonwealth publications; the collection of plays bequeathed by David Garrick in 1779; the Burney collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century newspapers; the King's library, the library of George III, rich in English literature; and the Wise collection of English literature. Its main feature is its comprehensiveness. This should not be lost sight of, for it means that not only the standard works, which are available in many places, but vast numbers of secondary and minor books which are far from being so common, are available for consultation.

It was at one time the declared policy of the library to attempt to make itself all-inclusive in all subjects and in all languages. In more recent times, various considerations have led to the adoption of a more limited policy, so far as the *purchase* of books is concerned, and the Museum has tended, in the case of foreign books, to specialize on subjects which might be roughly grouped as humanistic. This is due in part to the existence in London of "national special" libraries such as the Science Library, the Patent Office Library, and the Natural History Museum Library which specialize in the subjects with which the British Museum has found it most difficult to deal. It should not be inferred, however, that the collections as a whole betray this bias. The foundation collections of Sir Hans Sloane included his library of 40,000 volumes rich in natural history and medicine, and later accessions have included such collections as the very fine natural history library of Sir Joseph Banks. The Museum's purchases, moreover, for many years were made on a wide and inclusive scale so as to preserve the catholicity of the early collections. It is the present practice of the Museum to attempt to acquire "English" books printed abroad and also to buy books by outstanding authors and important books likely to be of historical importance in every field of knowledge. It is also a fact that many most important scientific works are published in the proceedings of learned societies and academies and as dissertations. These the library is very rich in.

Besides the special collections I have mentioned, the Museum is rich in incunabula, and in the early printed literature of European countries. It has extensive collections of the pamphlet literature of the Reformation and of the French Revolution. In music it has large collections supplemented by the deposit on permanent loan of

the King's Music Library in 1911, and by the recent purchase of the Hirsch library. The Grenville library bequeathed to the Museum by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville in 1846 has fine examples of early printing, literature, history and travel.

The manuscripts include the Cotton collection of books from the libraries of the monasteries dispersed at the Reformation, and of political papers, the Harleian, rich in political history, the Sloane, rich, like Sloane's printed books, in botany and zoology, the Royal collection, which incorporates the books of Thomas Cranmer, Lord Lumley and the Earl of Arundel, and many others. The collections number over 60,000 MSS., besides large numbers of charters and seals, and 2,500 papyri.

The volumes in the Department of Oriental Printed Books now number approximately : printed books 250,000, manuscripts 50,000.

In all there are upwards of 5,000,000 books on all subjects and in all languages available for consultation in the Museum.

#### ADMISSION

It has been found impossible, in practice, to grant admission to these collections indiscriminately. Situated as it is in the centre of London and attached to a world-famous collection of antiquities, the danger of being completely over-run by chance inquiries of a trivial nature is so great that admission has had to be restricted to those who need to consult books, not elsewhere available. This condition is interpreted with insight and understanding, and no genuine inquirer, whose requirements cannot be met elsewhere, need fear that his request for admission will be refused. Admission to all the reading rooms—the great domed Reading Room, the Manuscript Students' Room, the Oriental Students' Room, and the Print Room—is by ticket, obtained on application in writing to the Director and Principal Librarian. Tickets are valid, as a rule, for six months and may be renewed at the end of that time, again by written application. Objection is frequently taken to this requirement, but a moment's reflection will show that it is not unreasonable in view of the great demands on the available accommodation. Temporary tickets of admission are issued in the Director's office in cases where application is made to see a particular book or to carry out a small piece of research. Such tickets are valid for the day of issue or for periods up to a week. Special tickets are issued for each of the reading rooms.



The main reading room of the Department of Printed Books is, of course, the domed Reading Room, built in 1857 to the design of Sir Anthony Panizzi. The administrative staff is accommodated at the centre, behind a circular counter. In front of this counter are two others arranged concentrically, which contain the General Catalogue and a number of reference books. Readers are accommodated at long desks, radiating like spokes of a wheel from the outer of the two catalogue desks. The reader in search of a book, of which he knows the author and title, will find it in the General Catalogue under the author's name. This Catalogue, which consists of over one thousand five hundred volumes, is a complete record of all printed books in Western languages in the library, with the exception of newspapers, music and maps, for which there are separate Catalogues.

Requests for books are made on tickets, on which the prospective reader enters the heading under which the book is entered in the General Catalogue, a brief title, the date and the press-mark, adding his own name, the letter and number of his seat in the Reading Room, and the date. This ticket is dispatched by pneumatic tube to one of a number of receiving stations in the book stacks. On receipt, the press-mark, the date, the heading in the General Catalogue and the reader's name are copied from the ticket on to a cardboard strip known as a shelf-board. This is taken, together with the reader's ticket, to the place where the book is stored and is left on the shelf in place of the book. The ticket is placed in the book and this, with others being dispatched at the same time, is placed in a box and delivered by means of a mechanical conveyor to a central delivery station adjoining the Reading Room. Here books are sorted and sent into the Reading Room for delivery to the readers by the Reading Room staff. The entire operation, it is found, takes up to one hour. The reader can avoid this delay by asking for books in advance. Such requests should contain full details of the books asked for: the Reading Room staff is not large enough to undertake to look up books in the General Catalogue.

The walls of the Reading Room contain a reference library of 25,000 volumes to which readers have open access. These volumes are roughly classified according to a system similar to that of the French bibliographer Brunet. Sets of certain learned periodicals in frequent demand for scholarly research are also included. The reference books in the Reading Room are kept under review and,



wherever necessary, new books are substituted for those which are superseded. A catalogue of the books in the Reading Room was first published in 1859. The most recent edition is the fourth, published in 1910; this is in two parts, I—Authors, II—Index of Subjects. Two copies of this catalogue, cut up and mounted and with printed accessions slips inserted, are maintained in the Reading Room.

When the reader has finished his reading he returns his books to the central desk and receives in exchange his original application slips. Should he wish to consult the same books on the following day, they can be reserved for him and they are issued to him when next required, on the production of the original slips. Books are reserved for readers for two days and if not applied for are returned to the shelves on the morning of the third day. Should a reader wish to have books reserved for a longer period than this, permission must be obtained from the Superintendent of the Reading Room, but it is unusual for permission to be withheld. Readers' tickets which for any reason are not claimed by the end of the day, are retained and checked against the books the following day. When the books are returned they are sorted immediately and distributed by means of the mechanical conveyor to the various sections of the library and are replaced on the shelves, the shelf-boards which had been left in their place being removed.

Certain books may be read only in the North Library. This is a special reading room with seats for about 100, set aside for the consultation of rare and valuable books, specially large books, collections of unbound parts of serials and any other books which it is desired to keep under close supervision. Where it is necessary for a reader's work, books can be transferred from the main Reading Room into the North Library, on application to the Superintendent. Arrangements are also made, on occasion, for large numbers of books to be made available in this room. The North Library contains a small reference library, mainly bibliographical. It is intended to make it also the microfilm reading room.

Applications for music and maps are made in the same way as applications for ordinary books, except that they are made on special coloured slips, and music and maps are consulted in the two reading rooms, rare and valuable items, and very large and awkward maps being reserved for consultation in the North Library. The need for separate reading rooms for music and maps is felt very severely. There is little doubt that the Museum collections, which are very

large, would be better appreciated, and even more widely used, if such special reading rooms were provided. As it is, consultations in the Music Department are limited to those who wish to consult the rough, pre-1800 subject index and the MS. index to the opera librettos, or to look through large standard sets of music, and to those who require special information not ascertainable from the catalogues or from the reference books.

The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Map Room. Accommodation is very limited, but every effort is made to place at the reader's disposal the very considerable expert knowledge which the specialist staffs have acquired.

The Reading Room is staffed by a Superintendent and a number of assistants, of the Civil Service clerical officer grade, whose services are at the disposal of the readers. Their function is to maintain the service of books to readers and assist in finding books and to give advice on problems of research or bibliography. The Reading Room, in common with other sections of the library, is the recipient of very many requests, by post and telephone, for bibliographical information of all degrees of complexity, from all quarters of the globe. Except in cases where an answer would involve lengthy research, these inquiries are dealt with on the spot. Where detailed research is involved, the Superintendent is often able to recommend the services of a private researcher who is willing to undertake such work for a fee in a private capacity.

The photographic service of the Museum supplies photographs, photostats and microfilms of books and manuscripts to order. Application is made on an official form obtainable in the reading rooms, or by post.

#### CATALOGUES

The General Author Catalogue is in volume form.\* Its basis is the printed catalogue of 1880-1905, which was cut up, mounted and interleaved. It is kept up to date by the insertion of entries from the printed monthly Lists of Accessions. It is supplemented, for books published since 1880, by the series of Subject Indexes. These are published every five years; the first four issues were cumulated in 1900, but there has been no cumulation since that time.

\* But, as Dr. Esdaile remarks (*The British Museum Library*, p. 366), such a statement conceals the fact that every leaf, every column and every individual entry is movable. He likens the catalogue to a sheaf catalogue. See further on this question on p. 22 below.

*The subject index of the modern works added to the library of the British Museum* is an important reference book. It has from the beginning combined a number of class headings with more strictly subject headings; it is claimed that this method, based on actual experience of readers' wants in the Reading Room itself, meets the day-to-day requirements quite successfully. Novels, plays and poetry are excluded, but books in all other fields, in all languages, except Oriental, are included. Pending the publication of the quinquennial volume, a Temporary Subject Index is maintained for the use of readers, by pasting entries from the printed Accessions Lists, arranged by subjects, into volumes of the same size as those of the General Catalogue.

Besides the Author Catalogue of books there are also the catalogues of music, maps and newspapers. There are two main catalogues of music: that of "Old Music" printed before 1800 and "Modern Music" printed since that date. They are similar to the General Catalogue in the manner in which they are kept up to date, but only in the case of the "Old Music" was a separately published volume the basis of the catalogue: this was the *Catalogue of printed music published between the years 1487 and 1800 now in the British Museum*, compiled by W. Barclay Squire and published in 1912. The catalogue of "Modern Music" has been built up largely from a series of Accessions Lists which have appeared annually since 1884, but it still contains many of the manuscript entries, which were usual before 1880. There is also a printed Catalogue of the King's Music Library, which has been deposited in the British Museum on permanent loan since 1911. Music is entered in these catalogues under the names of the composers, but additional entries are given for editors and others connected with individual works and also, in the case of vocal works, for the name of the composition. Modern sheet music, however, is not catalogued; it is stored in ten-yearly groups, and classified within each group under composers' names. A MS. card index of this music is kept in the Music Room. Sheet music is available on application to the Superintendent of the Reading Room: applicants are asked to give the composer's name and, in the case of vocal works, the exact title, together with the approximate date of publication. This provision applies also to recently published music which has not appeared in the Catalogue.

The Catalogue of Maps is uniform with the General Catalogue. It is made up of an original *Catalogue of printed maps, plans and*

charts, 1885, and annual Accessions Lists, the whole being cut up and mounted in over 100 folio volumes. The Map Catalogue is a subject catalogue, the main entry for each map being the place concerned. Additional entries are given for cartographers, editors and contributors of all kinds.

Finally the newspapers. \* All the newspapers published after 1800 are now stored at the British Museum Newspaper Repository at Colindale (a suburb on the north-west side of London). Newspapers printed before 1801 are entered in the General Catalogue; those printed after that date have a special catalogue, maintained in the same way as the remainder of the Museum catalogues. This catalogue is divided into: (1) London and Suburban, (2) Provincial, (3) Foreign. It should be added that a complete file of *The Times* is maintained at the British Museum proper, as well as at the Newspaper Library, and that in the very near future it is planned to microfilm a large part of the newspapers in the collection, thus making them available in the Museum in microfilm as well as at Colindale.

Besides these catalogues, which are the main tools at the reader's disposal in the main Reading Room, there are the catalogues of manuscripts, of Oriental printed books and manuscripts and also a number of specialized catalogues of the printed books. A detailed description of these is given in Esdaile, *British Museum Library*, pp. 175-321. They are also listed in a series of articles appearing in the *Journal of Documentation*, the first part of which appeared in Vol. 4, No. 1, June, 1948.

#### INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

English books are available to readers through the General Catalogue about two months after receipt in the Museum, though in cases of urgent need they can be made available, on special application, at any time after receipt. In the case of foreign books, the delay is, of course, much longer, though books are ordered from abroad as soon as they appear in the publishers' lists. Let us now examine the means by which books are acquired, catalogued and made available.

Books enter the British Museum through one of the following channels: by copyright deposit, by purchase, by gift or by international exchange.

(1) *Copyright*. Under the Copyright Act of 1911 publishers of books and periodicals published in the United Kingdom are required to deposit, in the British Museum, within one month of the date of

publication, a copy of every book or periodical so published. Modifications introduced by Acts passed in 1915 and 1932 exclude certain publications wholly or mainly in the nature of trade advertisements, railway time-tables, books consisting of blank sheets and one or two other similar categories: these need not be supplied except on written application from the Trustees. Orders in Council have extended the application of the Copyright Act to the Crown Colonies and Cyprus and, by the Act of Separation of Southern Ireland from the United Kingdom in 1921, the obligation of deposit for books printed in Eire was retained and was further confirmed by the Eire Industrial and Commercial Property (Protection) Act of 1927. The number of books and periodicals received by copyright is roughly 36,000-40,000 separate works, 90,000-100,000 serials or parts, 1,500-1,600 maps, 8,000-9,000 separate pieces of music, 225,000 newspapers and about 5,000 odd items.

Books printed in the United Kingdom are received in the Copyright Office, a section of the Department of Printed Books staffed by a Superintendent and assistants. A signed receipt is given by the Copyright Office for every book received: in the case of newspapers receipts are given only when asked for. Books and periodicals received are entered in registers under the names of the publishers making the deposit, as well as under the names of the authors. Books are not retained in the Copyright Office more than two days, but before being sent to the library the British Museum stamp is impressed in indelible blue ink, showing the date on which the book was deposited. Periodicals which are shelved in the Newspaper Library at Colindale are kept in pigeon-holes in the Copyright Office for twelve months, except for certain newspapers for which there is a public demand; these are sent to Colindale each month. Books are sent from the Copyright Office to the Office of the Principal Keeper of Printed Books to await cataloguing; they are stored in the order of receipt and can, if necessary, be traced by reference to the Copyright Office register. To ensure that the provisions of the Copyright Act are fully carried out, current published lists, such as *The Publishers' circular*, *The Bookseller*, *The Times literary supplement*, the *English catalogue*, and *Whitaker's cumulative book index*, are searched and checked against the receipts, and application is made for any books which have not been received. Should it appear, at some later stage, as for example when a book is being catalogued, that other publications of the author have not been received in the

library, it is customary to inform the Superintendent of the Copyright Office who then takes steps to acquire the volume. Copyright registers are retained permanently for record purposes: existing registers date back to 1850.

(2) *Acquisition by Purchase.* The provisions of the Copyright Act apply only to books published in the United Kingdom and the colonies. Foreign books of all kinds, except such as are presented to the Museum, and such American books—fortunately a considerable number—as are copyrighted in this country, are purchased. A sum of money for this purpose is included in the grant voted annually for the maintenance of the Museum. In 1948 it was £15,000. Foreign books are selected from current publishers' lists, which are searched, on publication, by officers of the Department specially qualified in the various languages. Sir Anthony Panizzi, perhaps the greatest Principal Librarian in the history of the Museum, is said to have expressed the view that the British Museum should aim at possessing the best library of the literature of any country outside that country itself. It is doubtful, in view of the great increase in the literary production of every country, if Panizzi's ideal could be maintained today, but purchases are made on an extensive scale from all the countries of Europe and the United States, and, on a less extensive scale, from the South American countries and the countries of Asia and Africa. A genuine attempt is made to acquire all important books in "humane" subjects. Books on literary, historical, archaeological, sociological, artistic, economic, philosophical and theological subjects are bought, and in the non-humane subjects attempts are made to ensure that books of historical importance, as well as books treating of the history of those subjects, are bought. Reviews are read, and suggestions for particular purchases are welcomed from any quarter. The actual purchase is made through booksellers on the spot, and these booksellers are encouraged to take a personal interest in the Museum's work and to make suggestions for purchases and to comment when desirable on books chosen for the Museum. Where, as frequently happens at the present time, there are no current lists of publications, efforts are made to make good the deficiency by any available means.

The purchase of antiquarian books goes on continually, but the funds for this purpose are naturally limited. (It is right to add here that the Museum has had, and happily still has, generous friends, who are often ready to aid in an important purchase. Since 1931 one



of the most fruitful sources of this sort has been the Friends of the National Libraries, an organization to which not only the British Museum but libraries all over the country have great cause to be grateful.) Detailed search through all antiquarian catalogues, when they arrive in such quantities as they do in the Museum, involves a great expenditure of time and labour, and, in the case of a library with very extensive collections on all subjects, is really uneconomic. Special search is therefore usually limited, in the Museum, to the catalogues of auction sales and of the more important booksellers. Many books are offered to the Museum either by private individuals or by booksellers. Readers and individual members of the staff are encouraged to make suggestions for acquisitions in the fields within which they specialize.

All orders for books are dispatched through the Purchasing Section of the Department. Here a card catalogue is maintained of all books ordered: on receipt books are checked against the index and against the invoices, which are then certified as correct.

This section has had the additional task, since the last years of the war, of organizing the replacement of books lost in the bombing of 1941. This has been done by circulating duplicated lists of missing books, "broken down" in various ways: by languages, by subjects and by publishers; booksellers' catalogues are also searched and their stocks examined. A number of replacements also came from books rescued from "salvage drives", lists of which were sent to the Museum for examination. This source of supply has, however, been rather more productive of editions and issues not previously represented in the Museum than of replacements. Large numbers of books have been freely sent from countries abroad as a result of the lists of the losses: notable donors have been Canada, Denmark and Sweden. The number of books replaced so far is in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent of the 150,000 destroyed, but a further 10 per cent has been replaced by books—often later editions or more up-to-date texts—which were not previously in the collections.

From the Purchasing Section books are dispatched to the office of the Principal Keeper to await stamping. Purchased books are stamped in red ink, with the date of the meeting of the Trustees at which their purchase was approved. The invoices are kept permanently, being bound up into volumes year by year. They form a very useful record of the source of interesting copies.

(3) *Acquisition by Donation.* The British Museum has received,

and continues to receive, large donations from every part of the world, especially from learned institutions whose publications form one of the most valuable sections of any large learned library. Many publications are received by gift, which could never be acquired in any other way; these include private printings in small numbers of copies, annotated and association copies, grangerized copies and many foreign books, including theses, which would otherwise be passed over. Gifts must always remain one of the most profitable sources of strength in the Museum collections, and the officials of the Museum look upon it as a public duty to maintain contact with potential donors in all countries. It is pleasing to be assured, as frequently happens, that the donor feels honoured at having his gift associated with the Museum collections.

Donations are as a rule acknowledged by the Principal Keeper; however, specially valuable gifts are reported to the Trustees and are acknowledged by them. Serial publications which are donated are carefully checked and indexed, so that defects are speedily detected; when parts of serials are not received as published, a letter pointing out the defect is sent. Co-ordination of the work of the Purchasing Section and the official who registers donations is, of course, maintained.

When acknowledged and reported to the Trustees, donations are stamped with the Museum stamp, this time in green ink (yellow was previously used), and are assembled for cataloguing with copyright and purchased books.

(4) *Acquisition by International Exchange.* The basis of international exchange is an arrangement between Governments for the exchange of official publications. The exchange, so far as this country is concerned, takes place through H.M. Stationery Office.

The importance of complete or comprehensive collections of the official publications of foreign Governments need not be stressed to an assembly of progressive librarians, but it would be idle to suppose that the building up of such collections, whatever agreements are in force, is an easy or straightforward matter. Not only is the bulk of them so great as to be beyond the scope of most libraries, however large, but they call for the utmost vigilance, almost inhuman patience and persistence, a knowledge of what is being published officially in all quarters of the globe, and, what is perhaps most important of all, a really keen collaborator on the spot!

The maintenance of the State Paper Collections is the direct



responsibility of the Superintendent of the State Paper Room. The Museum has good collections, apart of course from our own English state papers, of the state papers of the Dominions, the Colonies and the United States. The collections of the state papers of other countries vary in comprehensiveness; most countries are represented and every effort is made to make each collection as comprehensive as possible, and there is a good collection of the proceedings of the various state legislatures.

*Cataloguing.* As they are acquired and stamped with the British Museum stamp, books are assembled in the office of the Principal Keeper. Hence they are distributed as required to the cataloguing staff, a record being kept of the books sent to each individual. Up to twelve months ago the cataloguing was entirely in the hands of the younger Assistant Keepers, whose professional training was based on the detailed use of the General Catalogue. As Assistant Keepers are expected to possess a sound knowledge of the classical languages and of the main Western European languages, it was the custom to combine in each consignment of books sent for cataloguing, books of all kinds and in any language, other than Slavonic or Oriental. Recently, however, a departure has been made from this long-standing practice and a special grade is now recruited, from successful competitors in the executive grade of the Civil Service, to relieve the Assistant Keepers of part of the cataloguing work. The introduction of this grade is an interesting departure from long-established practice, and it has been found necessary to re-examine and to re-adjust working methods which have been in operation for a very long time.

The British Museum Catalogue was published in volume form between 1880 and 1905. The current General Catalogue of the library is made up from copies of the 1881-1905 Catalogue, cut up, mounted and interleaved, with entries from the monthly Accessions Lists inserted at the appropriate places. The alphabetical order of the Accessions is rigidly maintained and, whenever necessary, slips already pasted into the volumes are moved to accommodate new entries. The original "column" is retained as long as possible, and when looking out a book it is necessary for the reader to search the "column" as well as the Accessions. Where the retention of the "column", however, impedes easy reference, the "column" itself is taken up and the individual entries cut out and mounted separately. In this way great flexibility is maintained and the entries are kept

under constant observation. When, because of the insertion of large numbers of Accessions, a volume becomes too bulky for easy handling, it is split up into two or more volumes. The whole catalogue now occupies about 1,500 volumes. There are three copies of the General Catalogue; one is kept in the Catalogue Room as the working copy, one is kept in the Reading Room and the third is used to supplement the Reading Room copy when volumes are removed each month for the insertion of new entries. It is convenient to mention here that a revised edition of this Catalogue has been in preparation since 1930. Up to the present, forty-two volumes have appeared containing the letters A to Co. This new edition is treated in exactly the same way as the old Catalogue and copies are cut up, mounted and interleaved as soon as published and substituted for the corresponding volumes of the old Catalogue.

Catalogue entries are written on oblong blue slips made of tough paper. When catalogued the book, with all the catalogue entries (main and added entries), passes to a reviser who checks the entries for accuracy and examines the heading to ensure that the correct one has been chosen. The book, still with the catalogue slips, next passes to the "placer" or classifier who places it on to the appropriate place on the shelves within the Museum's broad system of classification. Each book is given a fixed press-mark which is written inside the book and on each of the Catalogue slips, the book being subsequently labelled on the spine with a printed label. The Catalogue slips are collected, sorted into alphabetical order, numbered and sent off to the printer each month, to make the *Monthly List of Accessions*. This is published in three parts, English Books, Foreign Books, and Supplement, the latter containing corrections and additions to entries which are already in the Catalogue. On their return from the printer each month, the Accessions entries are cut up ready for insertion in the General Catalogue. The official in charge of this operation is known as the Incorporator. His work consists in indicating the correct place in each volume for the new entries to be inserted, in deciding whether re-arrangement is necessary, and in keeping a watch on the general correctness of the choice of heading. The actual physical insertion of the slips is carried out by men from the binding staff, employed by H.M. Stationery Office on the Museum premises. The slips are pasted into the Catalogue carefully by the top and bottom edges and can be readily removed if desired by the insertion of a paper-knife. This section of the bindery

staff is also responsible for inserting new leaves in the General Catalogue where necessary and for dividing volumes as they become too bulky. The process of incorporation is completed each month so that there is a minimum of delay between the printing of the lists and their availability in the General Catalogue.

The manuscript catalogue slips are retained permanently and are filed chronologically under the Catalogue headings. They are used for all subsequent alteration and, as they contain notes by the original cataloguer, are a useful record of research. A separate set of the Accessions entries is cut up, mounted on cards and filed by press-mark, thus providing a complete shelf-catalogue.

The Subject Index is compiled from the Monthly Lists of Accessions. Subject headings are indicated by hand on each entry in the Accessions (excluding, of course, cross-references) and these are cut up for insertion in the Temporary Subject Index in the Reading Room; a second set, similarly marked, is retained in preparation for the complete five-yearly Subject Index. Before the war, it was customary for the five-yearly volume to be published at latest two years after the five-yearly period. Unfortunately, owing to the war, the work has fallen behind and it is likely to be some little time, owing to the inability of the Principal Keeper to allot additional staff for the work, before it is possible to publish the five-yearly volumes as speedily as before the war. The normal staff employed on this work is two Assistant Keepers, with additional help when the five-yearly volume is being prepared for and going through the press.

Once the books are on the shelves, they are available to readers. The staff engaged on the work of procuring books for readers is distributed at various points in the bookstacks. The readers' application forms are sent to these points, as has already been indicated, by means of pneumatic tubes. Each book is taken from the shelf by its press-mark and its title checked with the reader's description. When it is taken away, the shelf board is substituted and remains until the book is replaced. The books, with the readers' application forms in them, are then sent by means of the mechanical conveyor to the central distributing point, where they are sorted and sent into the Reading Room.

The Museum has its own Bindery on the premises. The binding is let out by contract for a period of years. The contract has now been held for a number of years by H.M. Stationery Office, and it seems

likely that this arrangement will continue. The number of books bound in the course of a year is 13,000 with over 1,000 repairs and "re-binds", and, in addition to this, some 14,000 books are put into temporary casing. It is the practice of the library not to allow any books to be placed on the shelves without some form of casing. The Newspaper Library at Colindale has its own binding shop on the spot; 4,000-5,000 volumes of newspapers are bound annually.

*Staff.* A word now about the general administration and the staffing of the library. The over-all control of all the Departments of the British Museum is in the hands of the Director and Principal Librarian, whose function it is to administer the Museum in accordance with the policies laid down by the Trustees. The organization and day-to-day control of the Department of Printed Books is the responsibility of the Principal Keeper of Printed Books; under him there are two Keepers (whose rank is the equivalent of that of the heads of the remaining Departments of the Museum), one being responsible for the reading rooms and the information and "public relations" side of the library's activities, and the other being responsible for the maintenance of the catalogues and the organization of the cataloguing. There are at present two Deputy Keepers, in charge respectively of the Main Reading Room and of the incunabula. Under these officers the main work of the Department is controlled and directed by Assistant Keepers, the seniors of whom are in charge of various sections, such as the Map Room, the Music Room, the Purchasing Section, the Subject Index, and so on. Junior Assistant Keepers serve their professional apprenticeship, so to speak, by work on the General Catalogue and by assisting the seniors in the administration of the sections to which I have just referred. Assistant Keepers are roughly equivalent in qualifications and pay to the Administrative grade of the Civil Service. They are recruited on academic record—they are normally required to have a good honours degree, preferably in classics, with a sound knowledge of two modern foreign languages—and after an interview by the Civil Service Commission. No professional library qualifications are required in candidates, though, of course, some of them have such qualifications. Assistant Keepers are expected to specialize in a language or languages or in a subject likely to be of value to the Museum service. In normal times, they have experience of the work in all branches of the Department. I have already referred to the Assistant Cataloguers: this grade will undoubtedly play a big part in the future

development of the Museum service ; at present the problem is to equip them speedily for rapid assimilation into the existing organization.

Apart from these the library employs a large staff of the Civil Service clerical officer grade, whose function it is to perform all routine duties for the public service and for the various sections of the Department. Here again, once the difficult period of rehabilitation is over, is a grade of which much use can be made in developing the service of the Museum.

The British Museum Library suffered severely during the war. It lost many books ; it lost a great deal of storage space ; the reconstruction of its stacks was left half done ; many of the most useful members of its staff were taken for military service or other employment, and have not returned. It has before it some of the largest and most difficult tasks it has ever had to face : the restoration of its services to their pre-war level and their very extensive development ; the training of a large number of newcomers to the staff ; the making good of war-time losses and the gaps in the collections caused by the war ; the completion of the revised edition of the General Catalogue ; and, perhaps most important of all, the determination of its scope and of its relations to other related collections.

The day has gone by when a national library can hope to be the complete library : special libraries have grown up and developed services in particular fields which the national library could never hope to rival. It might be possible, starting afresh, to arrange a national library as a great federation of special libraries under one roof ; as it is, it is the task of the national library to maintain its own collections at the highest pitch of efficiency and to act as the co-ordinator of all complementary library services. To do this means a greatly developed machinery of collaboration. To develop this side by side with the development of its existing services, is, it seems to me, the next great task of our national library.

## CHAPTER II

# THE LIBRARY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY) AND SOME OTHER LIBRARIES OF NATURAL HISTORY

By A. C. TOWNSEND, M.A.

*Assistant Keeper, British Museum (Natural History)*

On hearing that Goldsmith was writing a natural history, Dr. Johnson remarked that the work would be "as entertaining as a Persian tale". It is to be feared that the brief delineation of natural history libraries which follows will scarcely be as beguiling as Goldsmith, although it may perhaps provide those interested in the subject with a few matters for note and reflection.

Students of natural history to-day, no matter in what branch of research they may be engaged, soon find themselves confronted with a formidable corpus of writings, ranging from the prolix and fascinating obscurity of the ancient authors to the concise and "streamlined" contributions appearing in modern scientific periodicals. Taxonomists, in particular, in their attempts to classify plants or animals, have to spend much time in purely bibliographical research, whether it be for such humdrum but necessary routine matters as the checking of references with the originals, or for more fundamental problems as, for example, that of determining which of several scientific names is the correct one to be given to a certain organism.

The literature to be consulted in any branch of natural history is intimidating in its bulk and never-ending growth, whether the field of study be a vast one like that of Mammals, or the comparatively restricted arena in which the so-called "Drosophilist" wrestles with his problems. In London, however, there are vast resources at the disposal of the student of natural history, and it is about the libraries where those resources are to be found that the present chapter is to discourse for a while.

For books on natural history as on anything else, the national library at the British Museum, Bloomsbury, must first be mentioned before we pass on to a consideration of the specialist libraries, and we shall call to mind that one of the foundation collections of the Museum



was the library of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753), rich in botanical literature and scientific journals.

Of still greater importance to the naturalist is the library of Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), which came into the possession of the Museum in 1827. This collection was catalogued by Banks's librarian, the Swede Jonas Dryander, who compiled the five octavo volumes (1798-1800), still considered as a catalogue of great utility and exemplary accuracy. In these days of minute analysis in classification, it is of some interest to note that in the botanical section of Dryander's catalogue there are 833 subdivisions. Small wonder that his friend Sir J. E. Smith said that no other science possessed anything similar.

But in spite of Sloane and Banks and the Copyright Acts, the serious student of natural history will sooner or later have to make his way to the scientific collections—and library—of the natural history branch of the British Museum, or, to give it its official and somewhat cumbersome title, the British Museum (Natural History), which was first opened to the public in 1881.

Now it is not generally known that the elaborate Romanesque building in Cromwell Road contains, in addition to what are perhaps the finest collections of natural history specimens in the world, a library of paramount importance to those working on those collections, as well as to all advanced students of systematic natural history.

The library of the British Museum (Natural History), which at the present time contains about 200,000 volumes, may be said to have developed from the nucleus formed by the 15 volumes of manuscript catalogues of Sir Hans Sloane's collections, an annotated copy of Sloane's *Voyage to the islands Madeira, Barbados . . . Jamaica* (1707-25) with the original drawings from which the plates to that work were made, and a copy of Ray's *Historia plantarum* (1686-1704) used by Sloane in connection with his herbarium. These were all kept with the Sloane collections instead of being incorporated into the Department of Printed Books.\*

\* For the history of the collections and library of the British Museum (Natural History) the following should be consulted:

- (1) *The history of the collections contained in the natural history departments of the British Museum.* 2 vol. and appendix. London. The Trustees of the British Museum, 1904-12.
- (2) *A short history of the collections.* British Museum (Natural History) Special Guide No. 9. London. The Trustees of the British Museum, 1931.

The first step towards the formation of a separate natural history library was taken in 1827, when the Banksian collections and library were transferred to the Trustees, and it was agreed that the Keeper of the Banksian Botanical Collections should also have exclusive care and management of the manuscripts and drawings. Furthermore, 148 volumes, that were either duplicates or had manuscript notes in them, remained in what afterwards became the Department of Botany.

From this time until the period immediately preceding the removal of the natural history collections to South Kensington, the several departments all had their own working libraries, but relied for their further requirements upon the Department of Printed Books.

The flow of accessions into the departmental libraries went on steadily between 1835 and 1879, and in 1880 a special vote was obtained from Parliament for the building up of a new library to serve the departments at South Kensington. It was decided at this time that the several departments should continue to purchase and hold works relating to their special subjects, while a fifth library, the "General Library", was formed to contain works, the subject matter of which concerned two or more of the departments.

At the present time the library of the British Museum (Natural History) consists of a General Library and five sections corresponding to the Departments of Zoology, Entomology, Geology (including Palaeontology), Botany and Mineralogy. As has been indicated, these Departmental Sections contain books and serial publications which treat exclusively of the particular branch of the subject with which the department in question is concerned. In the General Library, however, are found works on general biology and natural history, travel, topography, biography, general scientific magazines and the serial publications of scientific academies, societies, and those issued by universities and governments. The General Library also houses general works of reference, MSS., certain special collections, maps, gazetteers, correspondences, and also a collection of specimens of handwriting, which is often used to assist in the identification of signatures and localities on collectors' and Museum workers' labels.

Additions to the Museum library are made by purchase, donation and exchange, and, during its comparatively brief history, the library has received such major gifts as the splendid ornithological library of the ninth Marquess of Tweddale, which was presented to the Museum in 1884, and the entomological library of Lord Walsingham, presented



by its owner in 1910. In more recent times, Sir John Murray gave his valuable collection of books and pamphlets on oceanography to the Museum in 1921, and in 1939 the library was further enriched by the addition of the extensive and finely bound library of some 40,000 volumes at Tring Museum which Lord Rothschild bequeathed to the Trustees together with his Museum. The Tring Museum Library is a fine collection of works on natural history, particularly strong in ornithology and entomology, and containing several items of great rarity such as William Turner's book on birds (1544), which is not in the library at South Kensington; Moses Harris's *Aurelian*, (1766); and the rare Vol 8 (1848, mammalia and ornithology) by T. R. Peale of the United States Wilkes Expedition (1838-42).

Although the field which the Museum library attempts to cover is very wide, and the ideal of completeness is difficult of attainment under present conditions, those whose task it is to build up the collection must ponder upon some remarks of the late Dr. C. D. Sherborn, the eminent compiler of the *Index animalium*. Dr. Sherborn, in the Epilogue to his *Index*, wrote as follows:

"In any well-appointed Natural History Library there should be found every book and every edition of every book dealing in the remotest way with the subjects concerned. One never knows wherein one edition differs from or supplements the other, and unless these are on the same table at the same time, it is not possible to collate them properly. Moreover, for accurate work it is necessary for the student to verify every reference he may find; it is not enough to copy from a previous author; he must verify each reference itself from the original."

Dr. Sherborn worked for over forty years at the British Museum (Natural History) and claimed to have acquired over a thousand volumes for the library there, though, in his own words, "gaps still remain to be filled".

Sherborn's vast bibliographical knowledge was freely placed at the disposal of the successive editors of the Museum Library Catalogue, published in five quarto volumes between 1903 and 1915, and in three supplementary volumes issued during the period 1921-40.\* The five volumes of the main catalogue, and the first supplementary volume were prepared by B. B. Woodward, the first

\* *Catalogue of the books, manuscripts, maps and drawings in the British Museum (Natural History)*. 5 Vol. + Supplement, 3 Vol. 1903-40.

librarian of the Museum, who was transferred from the Department of Printed Books to South Kensington in 1881. The catalogue is an author catalogue with full collations and many bibliographical notes of great value to naturalists, bibliographers and librarians alike.

Indeed, many bibliographies have been and still are being compiled in the General Library of the Museum and in its scattered dependencies, the Departmental Sections. These bibliographies range from the short lists of references with which most writers of scientific papers seek to crown their work, to such major undertakings as the *Zoological record*, much of the compilatory work of which is carried out in the Museum Library. During this bibliographical research, problems of dates and editions constantly arise, and the printed catalogue of the Museum Library and its supplements, the card catalogue of recent acquisitions and, not seldom, the knowledge and memories of the library staff have frequently to be consulted.

Although the books are still split up among the General Library and the Departmental Sections, all purchases of books are made and all cataloguing is carried out for the whole Museum in the General Library. When books are sent to the departments, duplicate catalogue slips are sent with them for the departmental sectional catalogues. There is no general subject index, but the library is classified according to a scheme drawn up by B. B. Woodward and used in the General Library and the Departments of Zoology and Geology. Botany and Entomology have a somewhat different arrangement, and an experiment has been made of classifying the books on Mineralogy by the Universal Decimal Classification. The serial publications are arranged according to countries, and an urgent requirement is a list of current periodicals for the whole Museum Library.

As well as being especially rich in the earlier periodicals, the library possesses a large number of original drawings of very considerable interest. To mention some of these, in the Botanical and Zoological Departments are drawings by Franz and Ferdinand Bauer, of whom the former was employed by Sir Joseph Banks in making drawings of the plants at Kew Gardens. Ferdinand Bauer accompanied Robert Brown on Flinders's voyage to Australia and brought back a series of drawings of the plants and animals observed during their voyage. In the Botanical Department are the original water-colours for Sowerby's *English botany*, a number of drawings by G. D. Ehret, and the originals for the plates of James Bolton's

*Filices Britannicae*. Quite recently (1948) the Museum received as a bequest from the late Miss B. D. Corfe some 218 water-colour drawings of plants and 89 pencil drawings of flower sections. The Museum already possessed a number of Miss Corfe's original drawings of flowering plants, including those made for the Museum's series of picture postcards.

In the General Library are a number of collections of drawings, including those painted by P. C. de Bevere for J. G. Loten, Dutch Governor of Ceylon (1752-7). These drawings depict the fauna and flora of Ceylon and the Malay Archipelago, and were used by Peter Brown, Sydney Parkinson, George Edwards, F.R.S., Thomas Pennant, F.R.S., and others, for their illustrated books on natural history. Also in the General Library is a large volume of water-colour and pencil sketches made by the explorer Thomas Baines (1822-75) during an expedition to the goldfields of Mashonaland. Some of these sketches have been used quite recently to illustrate the *Northern goldfields diaries of Thomas Baines*, published for the Government of Southern Rhodesia.\*

The other departments, too, contain many interesting and valuable sets of original drawings, among which we may mention the drawings of plants and fish from the Eocene of Monte Bolca, the work of an eighteenth century artist, which were originally in the Banksian Library, and the large collection of drawings formed by Hugh Falconer (1808-65) in connection with a work on the Siválik beds. This collection, which, like the Monte Bolca drawings mentioned above, is in the Geological Department, includes water-colours and pen-and-ink drawings of Indian fossils and a set of various fossil mammalia drawn by J. Dinkel, J. J. Kaup and others.

The Zoological Department houses, among other sets of drawings, the Parkinson, Forster and Ellis drawings made on Cook's first, second, and third voyages respectively, the Hardwicke collection of illustrations of Asiatic Zoology, some of which were used for J. E. Gray's *Illustrations of Indian zoology* and Jardine and Selby's *Illustrations of ornithology*, and the Watling drawings of natives, animals and plants from the neighbourhood of Port Jackson. Some of the latter drawings are the originals of the plates for J. White's *Journal of a voyage to New South Wales* (1790). In the Zoological Department are the four volumes of original pencil drawings of

\* *The northern goldfields diaries of Thomas Baines*. Ed. J. P. R. Wallis. 3 Vols. 1946.

fishes of the Rio Negro, made by Alfred Russel Wallace between 1850-2, and six volumes of original drawings, some of them signed by A. Latham, T. Davies, Lord Stanley and J. Abbot, used to illustrate John Latham's *General history of birds* (1821-4) and other of his works.

In the Entomological Department is the valuable collection in seventeen volumes, with manuscript descriptions, of the water-colour drawings by John Abbot of the insects and plants of Georgia. There are also the nine volumes of original water-colour drawings done on vellum for Godart and Duponchel's *Histoire naturelle des lepidoptères de France* (1820-43), and also the original pattern plates for J. Hübner's *Sammlung Europäischer Schmetterlinge* (1796-1830), a collection of 852 plates, many more than the number in the published work.

In fact, the drawings and manuscripts are perhaps the most surprising, and certainly the least known to the public, of the Museum Library's treasures, and it is much to be hoped that, before long, an annotated catalogue of these drawings and manuscripts may be prepared for publication. The items are indeed recorded in the Museum Library Catalogue, but many additions have been made since the printed volumes of that catalogue were issued, and it would be of considerable scientific and historical interest to make a special list of the drawings and manuscripts for reference.

With regard to manuscripts, apart from the important Sloane and Banksian items mentioned above, there is a collection of manuscripts relating to the three voyages of Captain Cook, and a series of manuscripts of Sir Richard Owen, first Superintendent of the Natural History Departments of the British Museum, among which is a valuable correspondence on scientific subjects (1792-1892) in twenty-seven volumes. It should perhaps be mentioned that the Museum possesses transcripts of Sir Joseph Banks's correspondence made by the daughters of Dawson Turner. This correspondence covers the period 1766-1820, and is bound up in twenty-one volumes. The Museum Library contains among its manuscripts such items, to mention a few, as the letter book (1761-83) of Dru Drury, the eighteenth century entomologist, with copies of his scientific and other correspondence; seven volumes of the scientific correspondence of the Northumbrian zoologist Joshua Alder (1792-1867), and of Canon A. M. Norman, F.R.S. (1831-1918); the notebooks of A. R. Wallace, giving localities for his collection of birds in the Malay

Archipelago (1856-61); the MS. diary of R. B. Hinds, naturalist accompanying H.M.S. "Sulphur" in 1836-42; and the original MS. journal of botanical and zoological observations made by H. N. Moseley during the voyage of the "Challenger" (1873-5).

As befits a Museum of Natural History, its library contains a fine collection of Linnaeana, which owes much to the enthusiasm and generosity of Mr. Basil H. Soulsby, Woodward's successor as Librarian of the Museum. A special catalogue of the works of Linnaeus and of Linnaeana was published by the Trustees in 1933.\* This work, compiled by Soulsby, who unfortunately did not live to see its publication, is that section of the Museum Library Catalogue which relates to Linnaeus, systematically arranged, and with the titles of additional items in the library at Bloomsbury. It forms a revised and enlarged second edition of a catalogue compiled by B. B. Woodward and W. R. Wilson, which was originally issued by the Trustees to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Linnaeus in 1907. This first edition had 27 pages, but the second edition runs to 246, with 65 pages of Addenda and Corrigenda. An index to this work was compiled by Dr. C. Davies Sherborn and published by the Trustees in 1936.

This collection of some 1,226 volumes contains many Linnaean items of great interest and rarity, ranging from the fundamental treatises such as the various editions of the *Systema naturae* and the *Species plantarum* to such hors d'oeuvres as the rare poem in Latin, French and English, written by the eccentric Frederick Calvert, seventh Baron Baltimore, in honour of Linnaeus, and published in an edition of ten copies at Augsburg in 1770 under the title of *Gaudia poetica*.

As an example of the exhaustive manner in which this second edition of the Linnaean catalogue was compiled, we may instance the treatment of the various sets and editions of the *Amoenitates academicae*, a hard nut for any bibliographer to crack. In Soulsby's catalogue, an analytical account of the ten sets of the *Amoenitates* in the Museum Library is followed by a catalogue of the original separate editions with translations and adaptations.

\* *A catalogue of the works of Linnaeus (and publications more immediately relating thereto) preserved in the libraries of the British Museum (Bloomsbury) and the British Museum (Natural History) (South Kensington)*. Second edition. London. The Trustees, 1933.

This rapid sketch of the Museum Library may be concluded, before we pass to a brief survey of other natural history libraries, by recalling to the reader that the library of the British Museum (Natural History) is primarily for the use of the Museum staff in connection with their work of identifying, classifying and preserving for students the specimens acquired by the Museum. Lack of suitable accommodation—much of it is housed in corridors, landings and exhibition galleries all over the building—does not permit of the library being made readily accessible to the general public, but its resources can be utilized by those who have applied for and obtained the authorization of the Director of the Museum. Many postal inquiries are dealt with in the course of the year, and visits of inquiry are daily paid by students and members of the general public and are dealt with as staff and space permit. The provision of further accommodation, with modern shelving and lighting systems, is urgently needed if the library is in any way to be worthy of its magnificent collections.

In going on to consider some of the other London libraries which deal wholly, or almost wholly, with natural history, we will leave the library of the "dead zoo", as a child is said to have described the Natural History Museum, and begin with a brief account of the library of the Zoological Society at Regent's Park.

This collection, which was started in 1836, contains at present from about 75,000 to 80,000 volumes, with about 500 current periodicals. A new catalogue of the periodicals in this library is now under way, and the main Library Catalogue, at present in book form, is to be transferred to cards with the possibility of its being printed. The Society issued a printed catalogue of its library in 1854—a modest volume of 44 pages, and the fifth edition of 856 pages appeared in 1902.

Besides containing a number of very rare and important zoological works and setting itself the task of acquiring all-important works with any bearing on the subject, the Society's library contains several special collections of drawings and photographs which it may be useful to note here. There are, first of all, the water-colour drawings and manuscript notes of B. H. Hodgson, illustrating the mammals and birds of India, and we may recall here that the British Museum (Natural History) also possesses over 1,000 drawings of Vertebrata, presented by Hodgson in 1845 and 1858.

The Zoological Society's library also possesses a number of



original ornithological drawings, such as the Jones collection, and Colonel S. R. Tickell's drawings and manuscript notes illustrating the ornithology of India. Mention should also be made of the Sharp and Wolf collections of drawings, and a useful set of coloured plates of birds—the T. H. Newman collection.

Also of great practical use and interest is the F. W. Bond collection of photographic negatives of vertebrate inhabitants of the Gardens, some 5,000 negatives, which are added to from time to time.

Fellows of the Society may borrow books from the library, which is administered by a librarian and a staff of three. There is no subject index, though a draft scheme for a re-classification of the Society's library was drawn up before the war under the guidance of the late Mr. J. R. Norman, the eminent ichthyologist.\*

An important collection of books on botany and zoology is to be found in the library of the Linnean Society of London at Burlington House. This library includes Linnaeus's own library, numbering about 1,600 volumes, many of them annotated either by Linnaeus himself or by his contemporaries. There is no separate catalogue of Linnaeus's books, but the printed Library Catalogue, the fourth of a series, published in 1925, indicates the Linnaean items with a special distinguishing mark.

There are numerous important MSS. in this library, and a catalogue of these has begun to be published and has now reached its fourth part. The first part of this catalogue is concerned with the nineteen volumes of the correspondence of James Edward Smith, the first president of the Society.†

Also in Burlington House is the library of the Geological Society of London, containing about 90,000 volumes and, like the library of the Linnean Society, for the use of Fellows of the Society. The library includes those of G. B. Greenhough and Sir Joseph Prestwich, and it is interesting to note that the Society treasures the original drawings of J. L. R. Agassiz's *Recherches sur les poissons fossiles* (1833-4), the MS. of James Hutton's *Theory of the earth* (1795), and a number of the original maps of William Smith, the "father of British Geology" (1769-1839). There are about 500 current periodicals taken by the library.

\* I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. G. B. Stratton, Librarian of the Society, who has given me details as to the library under his care.

† *Catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of the Linnean Society of London*. Part I, 1934 (in progress). London, The Linnean Society.



Another important library for the science of Geology is that of the Geological Survey and Museum of Practical Geology, situated since 1934 in Exhibition Road, South Kensington. The Survey is the oldest national survey in the world, and its working library contains about 50,000 books, 25,000 maps and 800 current periodicals. The library originated with the library of Sir H. T. De La Beche (1796-1855), and includes a number of rare and ancient books in the science.

South Kensington is indeed a centre of scientific activity second only, if at all, to the Bloomsbury congeries, and its scientific libraries, including those of the Museums, the Science Library, and the libraries of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Entomological Society of London, provide admirable bibliographical collections for the research worker in the natural sciences.

For the student of natural history, and particularly of entomology, the library of the Royal Entomological Society in Queen's Gate, though open to Fellows of the Society only, is of considerable interest. Dr. S. A. Neave tells us in his *History of the Entomological Society of London*, 1933, p. 75, that "it is no exaggeration to say that today there are few libraries in existence in which entomological literature is better presented. Its great strength lies in its very complete collection of the old systematic works as well as of the many large and expensive monographs that Entomological Science has produced in such a profusion."

Built up by presentation, purchase and exchange since 1833, the library mustered in 1933 an estimated total of 12,000 volumes and some 30,000 separata, and this total must have grown very considerably, at any rate up to 1940.

It is of interest perhaps to record that the most valuable donation made to the Society's library was the entomological library of H. T. Stainton, a famous collection much used by H. A. Hagen in the compilation of his well-known *Bibliotheca entomologica* (1862-3).

The first volume of the catalogue of the Society's library appeared in 1836 in the *Transactions* of the Society. The second edition was published in 1861, and the third in 1893, this last being a substantial volume of 291 pages with some 6,000 entries. A supplement was issued in 1900 giving some further 4,000 entries. The third edition and its supplement has been kept up to date by Lists of Additions published annually in the Society's *Proceedings*, and today there is

a card catalogue containing cut-up and mounted entries from the printed catalogues, together with those in the annual lists of additions.

Housed in the same building as the Royal Entomological Society is the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology and its library, founded in 1913, and now the senior organization in the system of Agricultural Bureaux which exist to provide information and abstracting services in the agricultural field.

The work of the Institute's library is closely connected with the production of the *Review of applied entomology*, and the collection consists of books, periodicals and separates in the wide field of entomology, agriculture, medicine and veterinary medicine, public health, forestry, etc. There are at present about 11,480 bound volumes and 32,400 separates in the library, which receives periodicals in exchange for the *Review of applied entomology* which appears monthly, and the *Bulletin of entomological research*, issued quarterly. Monographs are received as review copies, and the large and important collection of separates is built up by gifts from authors, government bodies, institutions, etc. There are 503 current serial publications in the library, including bulletins and annual reports. There is a complete author catalogue for books and separates, which is also about 75 per cent complete for articles in periodicals. There is in addition a small subject index to the books and monographs.\*

Let us now consider two libraries situated at some distance from the centre of London, but which, none the less, play an important part in the library activities of the metropolitan area. The first of these libraries is the Horniman Museum and Library at Forest Hill, administered by the London County Council, and the second is the library of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

The Horniman Library contains about 20,000 volumes, and is open to the public, although books may only be borrowed through the National Central Library. The library is designed to illustrate the natural science collections of the Museum, with particular stress on Zoology and Anthropology. There are about 150 periodicals in this library, many rare pamphlets, some MSS. and drawings, a large collection of illustrations and lantern slides. About 300 volumes are added to the library every year. There is accommodation for about twenty-four readers, and among those making use of this

\* I am indebted to Miss F. Scheffauer, the present Librarian, for information about the Institute's library.

excellent working library are students from training colleges, school-children and members of local societies, as, for example, the London Natural History Society.\*

Also at a considerable distance from the scientific concentration at South Kensington and the learned bustle of Burlington House, are the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, with the famous Herbarium and library attached thereto.†

The library at Kew, founded in 1853, developed in the early days *pari passu* with the Herbarium, and is closely associated with the descriptive and classificatory work of the latter. At the present moment (1947) the library consists of about 50,000 volumes and includes a collection of over 1,000 books on travel relating in a greater or a lesser degree to botany.‡ The early writers on Botany are also well represented at Kew, and there is a valuable auxiliary to the library in the collection of prints and drawings of plants, mounted on sheets of paper and preserved in portfolios.

The library is classified by subjects, and also by geographical considerations, as the various floras are arranged first by continents, and then by countries or groups of countries, following the arrangement adopted for the Herbarium. The periodicals are arranged by continents, and then subdivided by countries.

There are also special sections for the general works of reference, the pre-Linnaean books and Herbals, books on certain special subjects, travel books, special groups of plants, pamphlets and reprints, etc.

Among the manuscripts in the Kew library are some Banksian and Bentham items, including the latter's diary from 1807 to 1883, and a number of letters from Charles Darwin to Sir W. Thiselton-Dyer (1873-81) and Professor Henslow (1831-7) respectively. There is also the botanical correspondence of Sir J. D. and W. J. Hooker, including the latter's journal of a tour in Switzerland, 1814.

In addition, there are two branch libraries at Kew: (1) the "Gardeners' Library", containing books on gardening for the most

\* Mr. L. J. P. Gaskin, Librarian of the Horniman Museum, has very kindly supplied me with these details.

† For this account of the library at Kew, I would like to acknowledge the kind help of Mr. H. S. Marshall, the Librarian, who has given me many notes on the rich and important collections in his charge.

‡ Printed catalogues of the Kew library were issued first of all in 1899 (as *Bulletin of miscellaneous information, additional series 3*), also in 1919 as a Supplement to the 1899 edition.

part, and (2) the Museums library in Museum No. 4, containing books on economic botany.

At Kew is prepared the *Index Kewensis*—an alphabetical list of every plant name published, with an exact reference to the work and the page of that work on which the name first appeared. The first two volumes, which include all names up to 1885, were prepared by B. D. Jackson under the direction of Sir J. D. Hooker, and were published in 1893-5. The work is still being carried on, and its connection with the library and its bibliographical implications are obvious.

Passing from Botany to Horticulture, there is little doubt that to the serious student of garden science the library of the Royal Horticultural Society—the Lindley Library—is of the utmost value. Botanists and naturalists in general will find much important material here, some of it unobtainable elsewhere in London, and, in some instances, in the whole country. The horticultural aspect, as one might expect, is stressed, but there is much on systematic botany with a close connection with horticulture. The Lindley Library contains floras and monographs of plant genera which have a horticultural interest. The collection is well indexed and easily consulted. The Cory Bequest (1936) added a number of rare and important items to this fine library. A feature of this valuable bequest was the books with illustrations of plants, particularly the coloured illustrations of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1939 the Lindley Library was estimated to consist of about 20,000 volumes and pamphlets. The library is an "outlier" of the National Central Library. The importance of this fact to students can perhaps be realized when one remembers that the Lindley Library is probably the most complete horticultural library in the world. An edition of the library catalogue published in 1926 has 488 pages, and since then, supplements consisting of about 330 pages have been issued. Furthermore, a list of books added to the library appears in the "Extracts from the Proceedings" section of the *Journal of the Society*.

To round off this account of natural history libraries in London, the attention of the student should perhaps be drawn to the libraries of certain other institutions to which the advanced student may seek access, should the more obvious and better-known repositories of books on his subject fail him. This may happen in difficult "border-line" subjects, where natural history shades, for example, into anatomy, physiology, or into clinical or veterinary medicine.

Hardly any mention has been made of the Science Library in the present account, but it should be unnecessary to emphasize the paramount importance of this great general library of science for natural history as well as for the many scientific disciplines which are the Science Library's province. No, the Science Library is hardly likely to be overlooked, but the student of Natural History should also bear in mind the libraries of the Royal Society, the Patent Office, the Royal Society of Medicine, the Royal College of Surgeons, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Royal Veterinary College, to name just some of the further sources of information.

The biologist is indeed confronted in London with an overpowering wealth of material, but although biologists, and taxonomists in particular are, or should be, bibliographically conscious, there remains a good deal to be done in the matter of indexing and making generally known the contents of such libraries as I have mentioned above. Such works as the *World list of scientific periodicals* are available, but the issue of more accession lists, bibliographies on special subjects, hand-lists of current periodicals, and the like would help students greatly.

So far as the bibliography of natural history is concerned, a step forward has been made by the "Society for the Bibliography of Natural History", founded in 1936, the *Journal*\* of which was well on the way to becoming a most useful organ for all who were concerned with the bibliographical side of natural history. Perusal of this journal, of which part 3 of the second volume was the last published (1946), will reveal a number of interesting papers, including some facsimiles of rare tracts, and it is greatly to be hoped that the *Journal* will be continued in years to come.

\* *Journal for the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History*. Vol. 1, 1936 (in continuation). London. The Society, c/o British Museum (Natural History), S.W.7.

## CHAPTER III

### SCIENCE MUSEUM LIBRARY\*

By D. J. URQUHART, PH.D.

*D.S.I.R., formerly of the Science Museum Library*

The Science Museum Library, or the Science Library as it is more usually called, was created in 1883 by combining in a separate collection the publications on science and technology in the "Educational Library" of the South Kensington Museum and the books which were not essential to the staff of the Geological Survey in the library of the Museum of Practical Geology. The latter had been started in 1843 by Sir Henry de la Beche who had contributed the whole of his library of scientific books. The "Educational Library" arose out of an exhibition of educational books and appliances held in 1854.

In 1883 the library contained some 44,000 volumes. By 1908 it possessed some 108,000 volumes and in that year it was moved to its present site in Imperial Institute Road where it still shares a building with the Royal College of Science. Today it contains some 334,000 volumes.

In 1912 the Science Library received 570 current serial publications and it was no doubt then possible for the staff to remember the peculiarities of each one. By 1925 a considerable expansion of the serial holdings had begun with the object of providing in one place a complete collection of the scientific and technical periodical literature of the world. In that year alone 1,400 current serials were taken for the first time and by the end of 1938 it was thought that the Science Library contained some 10,600 current serials. What the true figure is today no one is prepared to say.

This expansion took place primarily through exchanges and presentations and such methods make the receipt of continuations very susceptible to international affairs and economics. For instance, there are gaps in certain Italian publications due to "sanctions" and more recently some gaps have arisen in certain U.S.A. publications

\* This chapter was revised in April, 1948.



due to the so-called paper shortage in the United States. Of course wars add to the imperfections of sets of periodicals, and the difficulty of bringing the catalogue up to date will be appreciated from the fact that in 1939 the Science Library contained about 1,000 current German periodicals.

The considerable increase in the number of current serials the Science Library endeavoured to collect created control difficulties which have not yet been solved. It is recognized for instance that the catalogue entry which reads ". . . and onwards" may express an intention rather than a fact. The basic accessions register is maintained manually on 8 in.  $\times$  5 in. cards and, although the system has been modernized by the introduction of Kardex visible aids, there is still a very high dependence on the individual efficiency of the clerks maintaining the records. In theory, stocktaking may be a satisfactory check on the accessions machine, but in practice it is extremely slow. In 1938 the target was to complete stocktaking every ten years. At present, due to manpower difficulties, no stock-taking is taking place.

With the present methods there are considerable difficulties in providing lists of periodicals for different purposes, and the preparation of such lists has to be avoided as far as possible. It may well be that the development of a suitable punched card technique will provide a solution to both these problems.

The accessions records carry catalogue headings. The cataloguing code used is a local variation of the British Museum code. This code is fairly watertight and, given sufficient time, it is possible to locate the catalogue entry for a publication. It has the advantage that in general the publications of a society are together in the catalogue and the distinct disadvantage that it is impossible to deduce the main catalogue entry from a copy of a publication alone.

At present, in general, non-serial publications are catalogued individually and serial publications are catalogued as series. The classification numbers according to the Universal Decimal System are included on all catalogue entries. These are listed in classified order in the *Weekly list of accessions to the library*. This publication includes a section in which some important articles, particularly review articles which have been noticed in the periodicals received, are listed.

The subject and the library (or "author") catalogues are prepared by drymounting the entries in the weekly accessions list on



5 in.  $\times$  3 in. cards. The subject index is in two parts. The first was started in 1901 and is classified on an extension of the Dewey Decimal System. The system actually used was published in 1908 and, after revision, again in 1921. The second part, which covers accessions since the beginning of 1928, uses the Universal Decimal Classification System. Until the British Standards Institution assumed the responsibility, a great deal of the work in this country of advocating the use and of developing the U.D.C. fell on the staff of the Science Library. The Science Museum publication, *Classification of works in pure and applied science*, issued in 1936, although it has been out of print for some years, remains, pending the issue of a B.S.I. publication,\* the standard abridgement of the U.D.C. in English.

The increasing use which was made of the U.D.C. made it possible to attempt to create a subject index of articles in scientific and technical publications. This attempt began in 1927 and now there are some three million entries made by cutting up and dry-mounting on 5 in.  $\times$  3 in. cards, lists of articles and abstracts classified on the U.D.C. system. These three million entries occupy 1,228 double drawers, but it must be admitted that this large index is not used a great deal. The reasons for this, in addition to the anarchy prevailing in the information world, probably include the following :

- (i) The index exists only in South Kensington—the tempo of modern life seldom permits a research worker time to visit a remote library ;
- (ii) Selected parts of the index cannot be reproduced rapidly ;
- (iii) The entries have been classified by a number of organizations for widely different reasons and the methods of applying the classification system differ widely. For instance, some of the lists provided for permutations of the U.D.C. numbers and others did not. The degree to which subdivisions of classification numbers are used varies considerably ;
- (iv) Filing was done by hand and a number of filing errors have occurred ;
- (v) In a large index considerable difficulties arise in selecting manually entries dealing with a combination of subjects including combinations of sub-divisions of subjects.

\* Now available.

The development of a suitable "punched card" technique may overcome these difficulties. The most promising system so far suggested is that known as the Bush Rapid Selector. In this a microfilm on 35 mm. film is made of an abstract and its "punched card" pattern. The roll of microfilm is scanned by a photocell arrangement which causes a photograph of the abstract to be taken when the desired "punched card" pattern appears.

Obviously the development and installation of some such method as this will be expensive and such an enterprise would only be justified if there were appreciable evidence that there would be a demand for its products but, with such a system, it should be possible to provide a bibliography for an inquirer in Manchester or Aberdeen by return of post.

In one direction the Science Library has been left in no doubt about the demand for its services and that is with regard to lending. In 1913 the Science Library must have been not unlike a university library, except that the public were admitted after certain formalities into the reading room. Then books were only lent to the staffs of the Imperial College of Science and Technology and the Science Museum. After 1925 there was a continuous expansion in the number of organizations to which borrowing facilities had been granted. Today over 1,000 organizations which are carrying out scientific research or technical development work utilize borrowing facilities.

The number of specific requests received from borrowers continues to grow and now averages about 7,500 per month. The Science Library does not satisfy all these. Some requests are for publications which are not in the Science Library and a few of these at least have never existed. Other requests are for publications not yet received, others are for publications which are removed for indefinite periods for binding but the largest percentage of requests which are not satisfied on demand relate to publications on loan to other borrowers.

To improve the lending service the Science Library :

- (i) is endeavouring, with the co-operation of borrowers, to duplicate and, where necessary, triplicate periodicals in demand ;
- (ii) has recently introduced a rapid photostat service at a price which is comparable with the present day cost of ensuring the return of a borrowed publication. The basic charge for this service to regular users in Great Britain is 2s. for a copy of an article of not more than twenty pages.

In addition, the Science Library having direct relationships with nearly every scientific and technical library in this country and having become the principal general lending library for scientific and technical literature, has started a co-operative lending scheme between such libraries as are willing to take part to supplement its own services.

The nerve centre of this Supplementary Lending Scheme is a catalogue made by cutting up and drymounting on 8 in.  $\times$  5 in. cards lists of holdings and accession lists of the participating organizations. The fundamental philosophy behind this union catalogue is that, in this era of manpower shortage, the maximum use must be made of existing lists and, as a result, this catalogue conforms exactly to no recognized code. As, however, requests from borrowers are also inclined to conform to no recognized method of describing publications, this is not entirely a disadvantage. So far, although it is barely twelve months since it was begun, this union catalogue is able to provide locations for nearly half the publications which are not available in the Science Library.

But the fundamental question about a library is: what type of books does it contain? To determine whether a publication is within the scope of the Science Library, it is necessary to consider the following three principles together.

First, the Science Library collects publications irrespective of language, except that translations of works into languages which are less accessible to English readers are not usually taken. Thus the Science Library might contain an English translation of a German publication available in the original, or a German translation of a Russian work. It might also contain a Spanish translation of a German publication which was not available in the library.

Secondly, the Science Library collects publications which are likely to be wanted by the scientist or technician after he has been trained. Thus the library contains original reports of scientific researches and technical development work, bibliographies and monographs by experts on particular subjects. The library does not specifically cater for the undergraduate or the untrained reader.

Thirdly, the Science Library endeavours to cover all subjects classified as Pure Science (5) and Applied Science (6) in the U.D.C. system except that in Pathology (616), Surgery (617) and Gynaecology (618) publications are collected primarily for their contributions to the more fundamental biological sciences. Under Domestic Economy

(64) the library contains only a few scientific treatises, and under Commerce (65) the accessions relate primarily to the technical aspects of Transport (656). Outside Pure and Applied Science the subjects covered are primarily Town Planning (71), Architecture (72) (from a technical rather than a descriptive point of view), Photography (77) Geography (91) and publications relating to the history of Science and Technology which are of special interest to the library of the Science Museum. Old books which record the scientific or technical achievements of their times are still collected.

In applying these criteria the stress is on the extent of the scientific or technical information in a publication. In Pure Science it is relatively easy to apply these criteria as in such publications original papers recording the results of scientific researches are usually unmixed with other papers, but in Applied Science considerable difficulties arise, particularly with regard to serial publications. In these what is required is the "know how" of technology, and publications containing such material also often contain economic, statistical and social information. It is thus necessary, in addition to the above criteria, to apply a minimum technical contents standard. Once acquired, publications have so far been retained unless they have subsequently been found to be outside the scope of the library.

To sum up. If it is decided to preserve a record deep in the bowels of the earth so that the scientific and technical achievements of this and previous ages are not lost to such of mankind as may survive some future catastrophe, the contents of the Science Library should in themselves be adequate to form such a record.

This account of necessity has omitted references to many of the Science Library's activities, but some of these will be appreciated from a visit to the reading room of the library which is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5.50 p.m. each day except Sundays and Public Holidays.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE LIBRARY OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM\*

*By A. W. WHEEN, Keeper*

The library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, S.W.7, is a reference library for the study of the history, philosophy, technique and appreciation of the arts. It is open to the public free on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., holidays excepted. Admission generally is by reader's ticket, for which application is to be made to the Director and Secretary of the Museum; holders of British Museum reader's tickets or cards of membership of the National Art Collections Fund and certain other institutions are also admitted.

The library, now the largest specialized collection of art literature in the world (it comprises some 200,000 volumes and 300,000 photographs), had its modest beginning as the working library of the first School of Design in Ornamental Art established at Somerset House in 1837, the outcome of a Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures appointed by Parliament in 1835 to "inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country".

The machinery of the Industrial Revolution had been running for more than two generations, and, under the powerful momentum of accelerating technical invention, it ploughed on through depression after depression, until in certain fields, particularly textiles, pottery, Birmingham ware and fancy goods, the production of luxury for the middle class was an accomplished fact. Yet all was not felt to be well. In the field of industrial art the traditional crafts had been dislocated, the apprenticeship system had been disrupted, the craftsman was sinking into proletarian misery and competent designers for the new processes in the new materials were not forthcoming.

\* Much of the historical information in this account is from an article by A. Van de Put, F.S.A., formerly Keeper of the Library, in *ASLIB Information*, No. 26, December 1935.

Among men of taste the achievement produced only despondency. "I believe", protested one, "that the attempt to supersede the work of the mind and hand by mechanical process for the sake of economy, will always have the effect of degrading and ultimately ruining art." In the more sensitive manufacturer, made conscious of the sales value of art by the competition of superior French wares, it produced puzzled irritation. "People of taste are fond of complaining", it was asserted in apology, "of the many ugly patterns which our manufacturers are continually sending forth, when with the same trouble and expense, so much finer patterns may be produced; but they would not do so, if they only considered how many ugly tastes our manufacturers have to cater for." And to the new enthusiasm of the educationist it offered opportunity. "In former times", said one, "artists were workmen and workmen were artists, . . . it is very desirable to restore this happy connection." The Select Committee accordingly recommended the establishment throughout the country of Schools of Design, charged with instruction of the artisan population in the direct application of the arts to manufacture; and, aimed at the consumer, the simultaneous foundation of libraries, public galleries and museums for the improvement of the public tastes—"in all of which the practical application of the arts to manufacture should be deemed an essential element". But the time to implement these recommendations unfortunately fell on an hour of trade depression; the first Normal School of Design was set up under the Board of Trade in rooms on the top floor of Somerset House and the spacious programme of libraries, museums and galleries dwindled to a mixed assortment of "casts, examples and books", the instructional equipment of the School of Design.

The results did not answer to the expectation. The fundamental principle of industrial design, that "scientific improvements in machinery, and economy in construction of it, are intimately connected with perfection of form", though clearly stated at the time, was imperfectly understood; the notion of design was restricted to that of ornament, and it was found impossible to bend the academic system of art education to the humbler requirements of industry. After repeated inquiries and reforms it was eventually declared in 1849 that "to the classes for whose benefit it was established, the School appears to be nearly useless".

Following the Great Exhibition of 1851, which so painfully exposed to the contemplation of men of taste the anarchy and decay



into which the industrial arts had fallen, the original proposals of the Select Committee for improving public taste by the foundation of galleries, museums and libraries were revived. In February 1852 the Department of Practical Art was established, temporarily housed at Marlborough House, and there in September a Museum of Manufactures was opened, containing the casts and objects belonging to the School together with a collection of ancient and modern industrial art which had been shown at the Great Exhibition and purchased for £5,000 at the instance of the Prince Consort, who had perhaps been prompted by a private memorandum submitted by Gottfried Semper, the great German architect. These objects together formed the nucleus of the present Museum collection. The School Library, consisting of a lending library of 1,000 smaller works on the theory and history of art, and a reference section of 500 large illustrated volumes on architecture and decoration, many cut up to furnish the classes as examples, became the Museum Library, open to the public from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, Saturdays excepted, at a fee of 6*d.* a week or 10*s.* a year. In 1855 the Museum and Library, with the newly constituted Department of Science and Art, passed under Order of Council to the Lord President of the Committee of Council in Education, and in 1857-8, to make room at Marlborough House for the Prince of Wales, the collections were transferred to South Kensington.

The first classified, printed catalogue had been issued in 1855, followed by an alphabetical supplement in 1857, when the library contained some 6,000 volumes, 2,200 prints and drawings and upwards of 1,000 photographs. In 1860 readers totalled 4,560.

Once established at South Kensington, the expansion of the Museum collections was astonishingly rapid. After 1860 similar museums sprang up throughout Europe. By 1880 an unprecedented and incomparable body of material was available for comparative historical study. Despite its avowed and reiterated orientation toward aesthetic and technical education, it was inevitable that the Museum should, in its development, fall into line with the historicism that was so marked a feature of nineteenth century thought. From the first it was maintained that "a collection of works of art is best arranged on an historical basis to combine taste and instruction". The classification by techniques and materials, e.g. ceramics, metal-work, textiles, woodwork, etc., devised primarily to aid the technical student, favoured in the event the connoisseur, the antiquarian and,



most important, the historian of the arts. On the evidence made available in these great collections, the history of the arts has since been written.

The development and organization of the library, in so far as it is a reference department of the Museum, has been parallel to that of the Museum, following generally a technical and ethnographical classification. But the scope of the library always greatly exceeded that of the Museum, in that it covered not only the industrial, but also the fine, arts, music only excepted. In 1868, when a great expansion of the book collection was initiated, the library was newly styled the "National Art Library", a title which lapsed, however, in 1900 in favour of the "Art Library", when the Board of Education absorbed the former Departments of Science and Art and of Education. This rapid expansion of the library was concurrent with the compilation of the most comprehensive bibliography of the earlier literature of art ever to be published. The project originated in a suggestion made by Charles Dilke in the *Athenaeum* prior to 1851 and subsequently developed by Henry Cole, Director of the Museum, in which he recommended "the preparation of a general bibliography of art instead of a catalogue dependent on the accidental collection of works". Book titles obtained from British and foreign sources were assembled and edited at the Museum over a period of many years, the first sheets being printed in the advertisement columns of *The Times*, and thereafter, during 1868-9, in *Notes and Queries*. In 1870 was published *The first proofs of the universal catalogue of books on art, compiled for the use of the National Art Library and the Schools of Art in the United Kingdom*, two volumes of 2188 pages followed in 1875 by a Supplement. Though far from scientific by modern standards, this bibliography served the library at once as a catalogue and list of *libri desiderati*. In 1890 an author card-catalogue superseded the occasional, printed but unpublished, lists of new books supplementary to the *Universal catalogue*. Between the years 1881 and 1901 was issued the well-known series of Class Lists of books on the various arts; supplementary material for the revision of these lists, though accumulated until 1904, when a subject index was started, has never been published. The library has now three separate series of subject-indexes: the first in manuscript volumes covering the acquisitions to 1890; the second, acquisitions from 1904-32; the third, in which it is hoped eventually to incorporate the second, acquisitions from 1933. Together these indexes

though always under revision, constitute the largest classified bibliography of the literature of art in existence. During the recent war the library remained open ; but as a measure of safety these index volumes were microfilmed, and one copy is now in the Library of Congress, U.S.A. Index material for the years 1891-1903, in so far as it was not incorporated in the published Class Lists, unfortunately remains unavailable to students.

In 1884 the library moved into the galleries designed by Captain Francis Fowke, which it still occupies on the south side of the Museum courtyard. During the year 1899, while the Cromwell and Exhibition Road fronts were under construction from designs of Sir Aston Webb, the character of the Museum, which had long endured great confusion from insufficient space, was clarified and simplified. The various scientific and technological collections were moved elsewhere, the old name "South Kensington Museum" was changed to "Victoria and Albert Museum", and the collections formed into a specialized museum of the fine and applied arts. The library also was reorganized at the same time ; its very large collection of prints and drawings were formed into a new department of "Engraving, Illustration and Design", and the book collections were assigned the status of a museum department, styled the "Library and Book Production Department", with an exhibition gallery.

The library is intended for the use, on the one hand, of all practitioners of art, for architectural and art students, industrial and commercial designers, theatrical and graphic artists, typographers and artistic craftsmen of every sort ; and on the other, of art historians, aestheticians, art critics, connoisseurs and collectors. Though it has been the practice to avoid as far as possible duplication of archaeological literature represented in the British Museum Library, the special purposes of the art library make it inevitable that a large amount of such literature should be included—material which is now doubly valuable in view of the heavy losses suffered by the British Museum in this branch during the recent war. In addition to this public use, the collection serves as a central reference library for the other Museum Departments. The contents include much manuscript material relative to the arts ; ancient and modern printed books, both British and foreign ; catalogues of collections, public and private ; sale catalogues ; sets of periodicals and transactions of learned institutions, covering the history of art of all countries, styles and periods.

The range of subjects includes architecture, sculpture, painting, the graphic arts, ornament, the art of the theatre, textiles, costume, ceramics, glass, woodwork, furniture, interior decoration, metalwork, jewellery, enamels, coins, medals and seals, arms and armour, clocks and watches, illuminated manuscripts, calligraphy, book illustration, printing, book-binding, topography, biography, heraldry.

In normal times in the Book Production Gallery is displayed a collection drawn from the library and from the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design, arranged to illustrate the history and technique of the arts of the book. The exhibition comprises illuminated and calligraphic manuscripts; printed books showing the evolution of printing, type design and book illustration; a representative selection of European and Near Eastern fine bindings; and an exhibit illustrating the several techniques of book production.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, before the character of the Museum had been so strictly defined and narrowly specialized, the Museum was bequeathed two famous private collections of general and historical literature, the Dyce and Forster Libraries. The former, bequeathed by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, critic and editor of Elizabethan dramatic literature, contains a number of manuscript copies and many first and rare editions of the works of almost all the outstanding English dramatists, scholars and critics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as of Italian poetry, plays and romances, and editions of the Greek and Latin classics. The Forster Library, bequeathed in 1879 by John Forster, for many years editor of the *Examiner*, historian, biographer, and friend of Charles Dickens, is remarkable for its collection of English nineteenth century literature, a very extensive group of seventeenth century broadsides and pamphlets, a valuable collection of rare Swiftiana, together with numerous manuscripts and letters of literary, historical and artistic interest, among them three notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, illustrated with drawings; above forty volumes of correspondence of David Garrick; and original manuscripts, proofs and editions of many of the novels of Charles Dickens.

In 1940 the late Mr. H. J. B. Clements bequeathed to the Museum his collection of more than 1,150 bindings decorated with British armorial book stamps, which, in conjunction with the catalogue prepared by himself, illustrate the whole history of English book-collecting from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.

In other departments of the Museum are a number of beautiful

bindings in the making of which craftsmen other than the binder played the chief part, books in wooden boards covered with ivory or metal, enamelled or set with precious stones. In the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design are numerous pages and cuttings from illuminated manuscripts, of which an illustrated catalogue has been issued.

## CHAPTER V

# THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE AND ITS WORK

By SIR HILARY JENKINSON, C.B.E., F.S.A.

*Deputy Keeper of the Records*

### INTRODUCTORY

Though gratified at the invitation to take part in the course I must confess to approaching this lecture with some hesitation : because the course is about Libraries—no less than sixteen libraries or groups of libraries it is to cover : and the Public Record Office is not a library. In fact it must be my first task to explain exactly how different is the work of the Archivist from that of the librarian ; and how different the Record Office (or any other Repository of Archives), in its nature and functions, from the Library. That apart, no one has better cause than I to be aware of, and recognize, the close kinship between the two and to remember with gratitude the debt which we Archivists owe to the Librarians for the Archivist's work they have taken on their own shoulders in the past and the support they have given and are giving now to the younger profession in its early struggles for existence and for public recognition.

One other matter by way of introduction. This lecture, conforming to the pattern of the rest, might have been about the Archive Repositories of London in general. Quite rightly I think (if I may say so) I have been asked to speak about one, the most important : for to deal with all in a single lecture could hardly be satisfactory. But I must not be understood as underrating the importance of the others : of *National Archives* not in the Record Office, such as those of Probate at Somerset House and those of the Patent Office and Herald's College ; of the *County Archives* at Westminster and those of the *City* at the Guildhall ; of the *Ecclesiastical* at Westminster, St. Paul's, Southwark and Lambeth and in numerous Churches ; of the vast quantities of *Semi-Public Archives* such as those of the Bank of England and the Inns of Court, the City Companies, the Hudson's Bay Company, and many others ; and of the *Private Archives*, particularly those of Commercial Houses, going back in

some cases for well over two centuries. I hope that another year may see perhaps a Course of Lectures in which the Archive Resources of the City of London may form the subject of a series of detailed studies.

#### WHAT ARE ARCHIVES?

The Public Record Office would probably be described by most people in some such phrase as 'the Repository of the National Archives': not a bad definition, except that it creates immediately a demand for two more: for what, as a matter of fact, are Archives? and what do we mean by 'National'?

We had better begin with the definition of Archives, though I am perhaps a little unjust and ungrateful in suggesting that it is so necessary: for it is a fact—a very gratifying one to an Archivist—that during the last twenty years the word has come to be much more general in use in this country; and a good many Librarians have by now listened patiently while it was expounded to them. However, let me define it once more—perhaps for the last time. Archives, then, are the Written Documents (giving those two words, and especially the first, the widest possible interpretation) accumulated at any date in the course of the Conduct of Affairs of any kind, and preserved for reference, in their own custody, by the persons responsible for the conduct of the affairs in question or their legitimate successors.

There are four words or phrases to emphasize here. First, *Accumulate*: Archives are not bought or otherwise collected because someone thinks they are or will be interesting: they come together by a natural process and form a body of *Related Evidences*—related both to each other and to the Affairs which produced them. This is a most important thing for the Archivist because he must study to understand these relationships (not always an easy thing after a century or two; or even after a shorter time than that), to preserve them and to base all his operations on them. Next, they may be of any *Date* and result from *Affairs of any kind and any grade of importance*: I will resist this time the temptation to quote Molière and merely say that we all potentially, and most of us in fact, make Archives; though they may not all find an Archivist after our time to preserve them with the respect they deserve for the instruction of posterity. Thirdly, Archives depend for their quality on the fact that they were preserved by their compilers for *their own reference*: it is this which gives them their characteristic authenticity and

impartiality later on, when they are used for some quite different purpose of which their compilers had never dreamed. Archives, in fact, as we shall presently see, pass normally through three phases. In the first they are the papers on the desk, or within easy reach, ready for reference. The second is that in which they may still be needed for reference but are in general little more than the historical background of office business : at this stage they pass into a kind of Limbo, remote (often physically remote, for space in the office is always a consideration) from the scene of action ; and rather tend to be forgotten and neglected : indeed, in the past Limbo has sometimes lasted for centuries, with very serious results to the Documents. Finally, if they survive, they reach the stage where their value for research is recognized and their permanent preservation assured : it is at this stage that the Archivist, as a rule, begins to be concerned with them, though strictly he should begin much earlier ; at this stage also they begin to be used for purposes other than those for which they were compiled.

That brings me to the fourth point for emphasis—*Preservation in Custody*. It is this which is the guarantee of those qualities of authenticity and impartiality of which I have spoken : we must have some reasonable assurance not only that our Archives came into existence in the way I have described but also that they so continued : that there was never (to skirt again a somewhat hackneyed illustration) a Payne Collier loose among the Elizabethans. Note that our definition covers the possibility that the person or institution in whose activities the Archives originated may hand them on with those functions to a successor. In this respect an institution like the Record Office must be regarded as having something of the functions of all the institutions whose Archives it preserves : it is, *qua* Admiralty Records, a kind of extension or agency of the Admiralty ; in respect of *Pipe Rolls* it keeps in being the functions of the otherwise obsolete medieval Exchequer. The point is an important one because it emphasizes the relation which ought normally to exist between the Archivist and his colleagues engaged in current administration. The keeping of its Archives is, as the present Master of the Rolls once put it, an important function of government : and the remark applies, *mutatis mutandis*, at every level of public or private administration.

Finally, a point which is implicit if not expressed in the Definition, every Archive is in some sense unique and irreplaceable : a consideration which must powerfully affect every decision one has to make in



regard to its treatment and is indeed at the back of every rule of practice I shall have occasion to describe in the present lecture.

### 'NATIONAL'

But it is time to turn to our second sub-definition: a very necessary one (if we are to define at all) because people often talk of 'the Nation's Archives' meaning all Archives which it may be supposed to be in the Nation's interest to preserve; and that is not at all what we are to deal with here. Archives in this country include (according to the classification now generally accepted) five great categories: *Ecclesiastical*; *Private*; *Semi-Public* (that is the Archives of bodies which though private, or at least extra-official, in origin exercise public functions); *Public (Local)*; and *Public (Central)*. It is with the last only, the Archives of the National or Central Departments of Public Administration, that the Public Record Office is in law concerned, and the task is a sufficient one; though we may have a word to say later of activities which go beyond the statute.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

The duties of the Record Office are laid down (though not always very clearly) by an Act of Parliament of 1838: which followed on a period of thirty-six years during which an attempt had been made to organize the Public Records by means of a Royal Commission.

This 'Record Commission' itself followed on a Committee of Both Houses and one or two other Committees and Commissions; \* and during most of its long life made the common mistake of getting interested in the contents of a few Record Classes instead of attending to the safety and care of all.

The Commissions and Committees themselves came at the end of five centuries of complete autonomy in Archive matters; during which in a few notable cases, † Departmental regulations made provision for the safety of a particular Department's Archives, at least for the time being, but for the most part the great Offices of State became increasingly ignorant and careless of the vast accumulations

\* The earliest Report is that of the *Lords Committees* in 1719: two others of special importance are the Reports from a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of the Public Records in 1800, and that of the Committee appointed to report on the management and affairs of the Record Commission itself in 1836.

† For example, Bishop Stapleton's arrangements for Records in the Treasury of the Receipt in 1323 and the institution of the State Paper Office in 1578.

which a long and undisturbed history led to their producing. Tales of rats among the State Papers, of incredible treasures lying amongst masses of putrifying parchment in a disused mews, of priceless Records surviving only in a pile of dust scraped together by accident from the floor of a Chapel at Westminster, have been often told and I will not retell them here.

In the most primitive state of all which preceded this, the Records of all Departments of Royal Administration (in so far as the Court was yet departmentalized) were parts of the Royal Treasure and followed the king about; until, becoming too bulky, parts of them were deposited in permanent Treasuries at Westminster or the Tower: the overflowing of which in course of time produced the later developments I have sketched.

Those four stages form the background history of the Record Office. The Act of 1838\* put upon the Official who had for the longest time been charged with the care of a section of the Crown's Records—the Keeper of the Rolls of the Chancery—the duty of organizing the new Service which was to care for all: and located it on the site which had housed his predecessors and their Rolls for 450 years—the ancient *Domus Conversorum*, the House of Converted Jews which Henry III had set up in Chancery Lane and in which William de Burstall in 1377 had combined the two Offices of Keeper of the *Conversi* and Keeper of the Rolls. The new Act laid down that “the Records belonging to her Majesty which now are or ought to be” in a large number of “Record Offices, Courts, Places and Custody” (which it specified) should be in the custody of or in the charge and superintendence of, the Master of the Rolls; that he should have power, by the issue of a Warrant, to take any of them into full custody and to make orders “for cleaning, repairing, preserving and arranging” them “and for making Calendars, Catalogues and Indexes to the same”; that he should appoint a Deputy Keeper; and that “as soon as conveniently may be after the Appointment of the Deputy Keeper of the Records . . . a Public Record Office shall be established”. It also laid down that the Treasury should provide staff and additional buildings as required; that calendars, etc., might be printed; that the Master of the Rolls should have power to make rules of all kinds affecting both the functions of the staff and access of the public; and that “the Deputy Keeper of the Records under the Direction of

\* 1 and 2 Victoria, Cap. 94.

the Master of the Rolls, shall once in every year report to Her Majesty the Proceedings had in the Execution of this Act": and it wound up by defining "Records" as meaning "all Rolls, Records, Writs, Books, Proceedings, Decrees, Bills, Warrants, Accounts, Papers and Documents whatsoever of a public Nature belonging to Her Majesty, or now deposited in any of the Offices or Places of Custody before mentioned". An Order in Council of 1852 extended this to cover without reservation "all Records belonging to Her Majesty deposited in any Office, Court, Place or Custody", which were from henceforth to be "under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls", thus bringing in the contents of the State Paper Office and other offices of the Secretary of State and Public Departments.

#### SINCE 1838

Under this constitution the Department is still administered today. Let us see what the somewhat vague terms of Victorian legislation have come to mean after a century of trial and error. Almost every feature of our modest Establishment and Office Routine is, of course, the result of experience and experiment; a stage—not by any means the last, I hope—in our active development. But to trace that growth in detail would take too long: I must ask you to let me give you as a rule the present position, omitting the successive changes that have led up to it. I will merely say that these changes have been going on, and I trust are going on, all the time.

The duties laid down or implied by the terms of the Act suggest a series of questions. The *Contents* of the Office, both the old and the accruing Records—what are they? and of what bulk? How and how far is their growth and their accession to the Record Office controlled—what of the problem of *Elimination of Valueless Documents*? The *Housing of the Public Records*—how does that stand? Are there any large *Extensions of Space* or *Modifications of the present Housing* contemplated? Then the *Sorting, Numbering, Labelling* and *Listing* of the Records—is there anything special to be said about those? Anything which distinguishes the methods of the Department from those of other large Repositories? And closely connected with that last—what have we to say of the system of *Make-up* and *Packing*? What is done about *Repairing*—is there at that point again anything which distinguishes our work from that which is done on similar material elsewhere? and what special arrangements are necessary to facilitate the

*Checking* of the Documents in our charge and their *Production* when required?

That is already a sufficiency of questions but it is by no means all. So far we have not got beyond the primary duties of the Archivist—those of *Safe-guarding*. But once he has got these in hand he has others—those of *Making Available to Students* the Documents in his charge: and that prompts at once a further series of questions. What of the General Regulations governing *Access*? What of the *Search Rooms* and their Equipment of Indexes, Reference Books and so forth? What about *Publication*? the forms it has taken, is taking and will take? What about *Photographic Reproduction* of all kinds and the developments and improvements introduced or introduceable there? And, turning away from the requirements of more serious students—what of the *General Public*? how far is it able to gratify a natural desire to see famous documents—Domesday, or the Log of the 'Victory' or the 'Scrap of Paper'—which are known to be in the Office? or to exercise in a more general way a legitimate curiosity as to the contents of this enormous Repository?

Finally there are obviously, in this company, questions to be asked about our *Library*—its Size? its Scope? its Accessibility? And over-riding all these is the question of *Staff*.

Let us take all these questions in order: though, as there is nearly a score of them, our answers to each can only be brief.

#### CONTENTS OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

The Primary Division of the Public Records is, of course, into 'Groups', each Group consisting of the Records of an autonomous Administrative Unit. Actually there are a few Groups which are so called only for convenience, being really artificial. Such are the *Special Collections* formed by a mistaken policy in the past which extracted Documents of a like character—*Ancient Correspondence*, *Ancient Deeds*, *Ancient Petitions*, *Court Rolls* and *Ministers' Accounts*—out of the Groups to which they belonged and formed them into Classes which cannot now be re-distributed: such are also the 'Groups' of *Transcripts* (from the Public Records themselves and from Archives elsewhere); and of *Gifts* and *Deposits*, which are what their names imply.

Apart from these the Groups may be divided according to whether they are 'Courts' or 'Departments': the former including all the Units of Medieval Royal Administration and those

resulting from the activities of what we still call 'Courts'—i.e. the Legal. Or, we may divide them into those belonging to Units now defunct (such as all the Sections save one of the medieval *Exchequer*,\* the *King's Bench*, the *Common Pleas*,† the *Court of Wards*‡ and the *Privy Seal Office*§): and those (like the Records of the *Admiralty*, *Colonial Office*, *Foreign Office*, *Supreme Court of Judicature*, *Treasury*, *War Office* or *Ministry of Works*) belonging to existing Public Offices or Courts. Both are, of course, growing bodies: though in modern usage it not infrequently occurs that when a Department goes out of existence its remainder functions, and its Records are taken over by another.¶ In this connexion we may note that the Records of every large Department of State which has been in existence for any considerable time almost inevitably include part, or the whole, of those of smaller bodies (not necessarily Public Institutions||) which have come to them either in some such way as the above or in the course of business at an earlier stage—for example as *Vouchers*.\*\* The same process may be seen in Local and Private Administrations.††

To revert for a moment to our first division of the Public Records into those of Courts (using that word both in the ancient and in the modern, purely legal, sense) and those of Departments—it should be noted that under the Act there is a definite distinction between these two. The former are either automatically in the custody of the Master of the Rolls or may at any time be brought into it by the issue of a warrant for their transfer to the Record Office. In the case of Departments, the Record Office may, of course, make representations, but ultimately the decision whether and when a transfer shall be made is allowed to rest with the Department concerned; though

\* The King's Remembrancer's Department still exists.

† King's Bench and Common Pleas became Divisions of a single Court under the Supreme Court of Judicature Act of 1873.

‡ The Court of Wards was abolished, with Feudal Tenures, in 1660.

§ Though there is still a Lord Privy Seal the Privy Seal Office was abolished in 1884.

¶ Occasionally they are divided. Thus part of the Archives of the *Ministry of Munitions* during the war of 1914-1918 forms a Group under its own name, parts have been absorbed by other Departments.

|| For example, the Archives of the three successive *African Companies* now form a class (T.70) of *Treasury* Records.

\*\* Nearly all our Original Accounts of the medieval *Wardrobe*, for instance, come to us as *Exchequer* Records.

†† For instance, the Archives of the great *Banks* or *Railway Companies* should include those of quantities of smaller bodies which they have absorbed.

technically the Documents are in the 'charge and superintendence' of the Master of the Rolls throughout; and might presumably be the subject of a warrant to bring them into 'custody'.

The total of 'Groups' at present in the Record Office is 78: of which 41 are Departmental: and within these there are 3,363 'Classes'. Now what of the Documents which never come to us—the Classes which are judged not to be of sufficient interest to justify their permanent preservation?

#### ELIMINATION

No satisfactory plan for destroying the documents which are not to be preserved for Posterity has ever been or ever will be invented, because we do not and cannot know what Posterity will need: but some destruction the Archivist must have or he (and the Historian and Economist) would soon be snowed under. The Record Office system is laid down by a supplementary Act of 1877\*: under this, Schedules specifying Classes which it is not proposed to preserve permanently, and the periods after which they may† be destroyed, are drafted (generally by the Department concerned), and discussed by a Committee consisting of 'Inspecting Officers' from the Record Office and representatives from the Department. The Schedule thus amended is signed by its compilers and is then signed by the Master of the Rolls and the Head of the Department and laid before Parliament for a period of four weeks: after which it becomes operative. For many years it has been the rule that scheduling (and any 'weeding' it entails) must have been completed before transfers are made to the Record Office. In 'Destruction' Records are disposed of as 'confidential waste': but in the case of Classes which, though not of sufficient national interest to justify permanent preservation in the Record Office, are considered to be of value to local or other special interests, the Schedule may authorize their transfer to some suitable Repository which will undertake their permanent preservation.‡

\* 40 and 41 Victoria, Cap. 55. The evidence in Committee preceding this Act, especially that of Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, then Deputy Keeper, is very interesting.

† Schedules are permissive. The Department need not destroy if it does not after all wish to do so but the Record Office will not, of course, accept transfers of scheduled classes.

‡ For example, some Records of the Home Guard will probably be disposed of by the War Office in this way through the British Records Association.



The principles observed by Inspecting Officers in arriving at their decisions are hard to define: but broadly speaking there are (apart from their practical use as precedents) four reasons for which it may be desirable to preserve Classes of Records. The first two are, of course, that they give material for the history of the Department and a comprehensive and sufficiently detailed account of its work: and the third that they show the way in which the work was done—the machinery of Administration. For the first two of these the Department is generally anxious itself to provide though (if accumulation is allowed to go on too long before a decision is taken) it may be necessary to offer suggestions based on experience elsewhere: and the third, when classes are not otherwise notably suitable for preservation, is generally covered by a practice that has been in force for the last thirty-four years, by which the Record Office asks for and preserves, as part of its own official Records, specimens from the Classes to be destroyed by any Department.

With the fourth reason we come to the difficulty of which I spoke at the beginning of this section: for this reason is that a large proportion of Records are ultimately valued for what might be called their incidental content, the material that they contain for interests which were not in the minds of their compilers and which it is, to say the least, extremely difficult to predict. Someone in the seventeenth century makes a routine entry for legal purposes of certain points concerning the transfer of a piece of land in Warwickshire: the twentieth century takes very little interest in the land or the legal instrument which transferred it but is excited by the fact that William Shakespeare was one of the Parties. Faced with the problem of providing for largely unpredictable possibilities of this kind, the Inspecting Officer can rely upon little but common sense criteria: if a class, which need not otherwise be preserved, is found to contain incidentally references to a very large number of people or of things or topics—references not duplicated elsewhere—it is an obvious candidate for preservation.

I must not enlarge on this point: but may add that the modern multiplication of Offices and piling up of Papers has added very much to the volume of work falling on this Section of the Staff; that during the war the Record Office was able to do useful work by urging Departments to revise (in accordance with a rule made under the Defence of the Realm Act) the times for which they were



scheduled to keep certain Classes not of permanent value and thus to provide paper for salvage; that the Schedules from 1877 to 1913 have been reprinted as a volume\* and a sequel is in contemplation; and that there is now becoming evident a small but laudable tendency on the part of Economists and Modern Historians to read these Schedules; which are being made slightly less jejune, more explanatory.

#### THE HOUSING OF THE RECORDS

The case for their Preservation settled, how do we house the vast and growing mass?

On the traditional site to which I have referred—the Rolls Estate or Liberty of the Rolls as it had come to be called—were erected between 1850 and 1896 five blocks, forming now a single building which stretches the whole distance between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane and has a frontage also on Chancery Lane. The total length is well over a hundred yards and includes, in a basement and three floors, in addition to the Public Rooms and those used by the Staff, 140 Strong Rooms: the Office having been built before the 'stack' system became popular—a circumstance upon which war experiences led us, on the whole, to congratulate ourselves. Except in the basement, the rooms are all about sixteen feet in height and have a mezzanine of iron gratings. Each has, in addition to a general locking system by floors, its own individual lock, with a series of double-locking master-keys for all. The structure is almost entirely fire-proof but wood (pine!) in certain parts of the roof caused some anxiety during the late war: at which time one was tempted to think the building almost large enough to act as an aiming point for bombers.† Also it has not a very adequate 'fire-belt'.

The Racking in the Strong Rooms is of iron throughout and the Shelves (of which there are about thirty-five miles) were formerly all of slate. Opinion at present is in favour of a 'duck-board' pattern in teak but we have minds open for improvements in this: looking always for three things—a vertical movement of air, a surface which will minimize friction and a material which, while it

\* Published by the Stationery Office in 1914.

† It was in fact 'straddled' a number of times by sticks of four bombs, two landing to the north and two to the south. It actually received only one hit from a high explosive bomb and a fair number of incendiaries, which were put out. It was also near enough to burning neighbours to be uncomfortably warm on more than one occasion: once there were seven fires in progress simultaneously within 200 yards.

does not encourage insect life, will also not encourage condensation. Damp is, in fact, one of our principal enemies: in recent years forced air-circulation between rooms has been tried as a means of combating the recurrent trouble of mildew;\* and so far as fire-risks are concerned it would be almost true to say that our chief fear is of the hoses of the fire brigade.

The need of *New Buildings* (which the site would admit) has been urged for more than thirty years: and in spite of economies effected by improved packing, became instant after the first war. Some relief was obtained by the definite adoption in 1929 of the principle of storing in a separate building removed from the centre the Classes of Departmental Records not yet opened to Public Inspection: and the Office went so far afield as Canterbury to secure a disused Gaol which made an excellent Repository. This was evacuated during the war; at which time the Department removed gradually to a series of *Temporary Repositories* in safer localities 88,000 large packages (2,000 tons) from this and from the main (Chancery Lane) Repository. After the war, the Gaol being no longer available, temporary accommodation was secured for the 'Canterbury' Records in a 'Deep Shelter'—a 'Tube' Railway extension, conveniently situated in our immediate neighbourhood: and that is the present condition of affairs except that a section of the staff (Repairers, Binders and Photographers) have very recently been moved to temporary hutments outside the building thus freeing a few more rooms for storage. Obviously this is no time for large building schemes but the occupation of the 'Deep Shelter' at Furnival Street made us think of other possibilities.

#### 'LIMBO'

Accruals of the Records which are to be permanently preserved take place so far as the Law Courts are concerned at fairly regular intervals: and those from Departments (though the date at which they come is regulated by individual Departmental needs) became also regular in some cases with the establishment of the Canterbury

\* A check on humidity is kept by hygrometric readings; 62 per cent relative humidity having been established by research some years ago as the safety line. The modern specific of 'conditioned air' could not be installed save at prohibitive cost; so one is saved the embarrassment of deciding whether one would on other grounds like it. The present writer confesses himself a heretic.

Repository, and would become so in a much larger number of cases if considerations of space and staff permitted. But the second or 'Limbo' phase of Archive life of which I spoke above will always persist for long or short periods because there will always be Documents which, though no longer current, cannot conveniently be transferred to the Public Record Office; either because they are still wanted too frequently for reference, or because they have not yet been put in sufficiently good order, or because they include documents which have yet to be 'weeded'. Documents in this state, though they undoubtedly come within the terms of the Act, had not in the past attracted much attention from the Record Office (which had indeed plenty of other problems to consider): but during the war it was judged necessary to make some kind of census of them;\* and in 1943 a scheme was propounded by which accommodation for such Documents (and for Departmental staff working on them), instead of being provided by the Ministry of Works piecemeal, as individual Departments had need of it, should be made available in a single building or series of buildings of which the Record Office should take general charge. The taking over of the Furnival Street Deep Shelter suggested the possibility (since other similar shelters were found to be at least temporarily available) of making an earlier start than could have been hoped in the present difficult times: and at the moment we control five such shelters housing large masses of Documents from nearly twenty Departments. What will be the ultimate arrangement cannot be predicted, but probably it may take the form of a large establishment in the outer suburbs. Meanwhile the organization has been started and a valuable link between the Record Office and the Record-making Departments established. It is even possible that this may lead to fresh and more successful treatment of a problem which has been more than once debated in the past—that of securing a more efficient regulation of the materials upon which Records are made or in which they are preserved.

#### SORTING, NUMBERING, LISTING: AND THE 'REFERENCE'

It is hardly necessary to say to an audience of Librarians that, having settled what you are going to take in and where you are going to put it, almost the first thing you have to think of will be what they would call the 'Accessioning' and, soon after, the Cataloguing of

\* The first returns indicated the existence of Departmental Records (current and in the 'Limbo' phase) in 399 places!

Accruals. Only it does not work out in quite the same way in the case of Records. (Unsorted Documents I will leave out of consideration for the moment because we do not now as a rule accept transfers in that state: our *Sorting* is thus largely confined to a few outlying parts of the existing accumulations, such as the Writs of the medieval Courts of Law, which are still 'in bulk'.) Archives being natural accumulations of related Documents, there should normally be, for us, no question of what is their right order. Each should have its natural place in a File, Volume, Bundle or whatever may be the primary unit of aggregation; each File (etc.)—'*Piece*' is our general term for them—should similarly have its place ready made for it in a *Class*; each *Class* in a *Group*: and those three elements—*Piece*, *Class*, *Group*—form the three parts of the '*Reference*' by which it is known. Shelf-mark or Press-mark we do not use\*: C.O.5/10—the tenth *Piece* in *Class* 5 of the C.O. *Group*—is C.O.5/10, and available by that reference, wherever it may be placed in the Repository. All therefore that we have to do primarily with a Transfer of Records (improvements in Labelling and Make-up may of course come later†) is to insist that all pieces be numbered and accompanied by a numbered list: and, when they arrive, to make a suitable alteration in or addition to an existing compilation in which the contents of the Office are summarized.

#### THE SUMMARY OF RECORDS

It is this compilation which is really the basis of the whole of our work. It is a large Typescript, several copies of which are kept constantly up to date, in which are entered in alphabetical and numerical order,‡ under Groups, all the Classes of Records we hold,

\* The only two approaches to an exception to this rule are in the case of Records which are themselves in the nature of an Index to other Records and of Maps or other large Annexures. *Indexes*, while retaining their true references, are removed from their Classes and placed in a special Index Room and given an Index Room number by which they are produced. *Maps*, *Plans* and the like are also removed when their safety requires it and numbered and stored separately. Any documents thus removed are replaced by 'dummies' showing their new (artificial) location.

† Ideally—and closer liaison with Departments is making it increasingly possible—the Record Office system in these matters, which has reached in process of time an elaborate simplicity, should be adopted by a Department before the transfer is made.

‡ The two orders do not always conform because new Classes, when they are added, must naturally be given a late number in the series: in such cases the alphabetical entry in the Summary takes the form of a cross reference to the numerical.

with their abbreviated titles (C.O.5, for instance, which I cited above, is in full "*Colonial Office, America and West Indies*"\*) the number of pieces each contains, its covering dates and (in manuscript) its location in the Repository. On the order of the Summary are based the order in which Classes figure in the official '*Guide*'; the order (so far as possible) of the Records on the shelves and of the Indexes in the Search Rooms; and the order of various General Indexes such as those of Means of Reference, of Photographs made, of Productions and of Repairs. Its wartime edition showed the whereabouts of every class or portions of a class in eight different Repositories: and the Classes, as we have said, number at present well over 3,000.

*Lists*—the detailed sequels to the Summary—are, in Record Office practice, a bare enumeration of the distinguishing character of each piece (very generally its date) and its individual number in the Class: in the example cited above, for instance, the List will tell you that C.O.5/10 is the volume of Correspondence for 1710-52 relating to Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. But there is also in every Strong Room a '*Block List*' which shows the Press in which each Class is located.

Between them, *Summary*, *Lists* and *Block Lists* constitute the minimum requirements alike for the Checking and for the Production of Records. Now what of the way in which they are bestowed in the Strong Rooms?

#### \* PACKING: AND A LITTLE ABOUT LABELLING

There would be obvious conveniences (perhaps even more for an Archivist than for a Librarian: for Records do assume such odd shapes) in packing according to size and proportions: some classes in fact, such as the monstrous *Plea Rolls*, do have to have special accommodation and there must always be individual special cases. Similarly there would be some obvious advantages in placing the Classes which are least in demand (regardless of the Groups to which they belong) in the most inaccessible parts of our very large building:

\* The use of letters to denote Groups and Numbers instead of the names of Classes is purely a labour-saving and space-saving device, primarily intended for the writing of tickets and printing of labels. When quoting or citing a Record students are advised to follow our Office practice; which is to give its full title with the abbreviated reference in brackets, thus—*Treasury, In-Letters* (T.r)—unless we have occasion to mention the same class a large number of times; when the shorter form may be used after the first citation.

and here again special cases must be allowed for. On the whole, however, our rule is to follow in packing the numerical order of Pieces within a Class and the numerical order of classes within a Group. The reason for this is of course to simplify checking and production. In theory the Attendant called upon to produce for inspection a single piece out of any of our Classes of Records, goes first to the 'Summary' to find which of the 140 Strong Rooms he must visit and, arrived there, consults the 'Block List' to find upon which of the 400-500 shelves in the room his Piece is located. Actually he generally knows from memory in which room, or series of adjacent rooms, the Group in question is located and can tell by looking at the shelves roughly where the Class he wants will be: his eye rests, for instance, on C.O.75 and he knows that he must work backwards to find C.O.5. (The Presses are numbered, though these numbers do not figure on the Records: and their numbering follows the same order in every room.)

Our system of Reference and Production always reminds me of the electric telephone; which scientifically speaking (we used to be told) would not work, but in practice did. It is aided a good deal by a careful system of *Labelling* which uses, wherever possible, a pasted-on label for each of the three parts of the Reference: the first two (printed in scarlet) being placed at the head of the back of the volume, file, box, etc., and the third (in black) at the foot. Supplementary labels in distinctive colours and shapes—such as the green one that proclaims a Record 'Unfit for Production'—we use to a considerable extent: but there is not space to detail them here.

Three things stand out as the result of a good deal of experiment and experience in packing during the last twenty years. The first is that with the exercise of a little ingenuity in the adjustment of shelves, use of supplementary shelves and so forth (by the way, it is absolutely essential that shelves should be very easily adjustable\* and interchangeable), the packing of pieces of varying size and shape in their numerical order need not be very uneconomical. The second is that it is possible to be too economical in packing: too exact a fitting, for instance, of a series of books between shelves is so bad for air-circulation and for binding and boxes that it is not worth while. The third is that a homogeneous system of *Labelling* is invaluable.

\* Practically the whole system of our 'bearers' for shelves has been altered for this reason during the last twenty years. Uniform shelving as between rooms we cannot (alas!) attain, except when racking a new room.



A final test of the system I have described is that having evacuated half the contents of the Office during the war, and displaced much of the remainder, we could think of nothing better, when peace broke out, than to put everything back as it had been before: and that the operation, even though single Classes had to be gathered together from scattered Repositories, proved unexpectedly easy. Since the officer who carried out these vast moves was not the officer who designed the system of Packing, the evidence may be considered good: and we may turn to another, but closely related, question.

### MAKE-UP

This topic is one upon which a great deal might be written; because Archives being so varied as they are (especially old ones) in size, shape and material there must necessarily have been within the experience of anyone who has been in charge of work of this kind at the Public Record Office a vast amount of *ad hoc* devising of an interesting and even amusing kind. The invention, for example, of a suitable make-up for a Map thirty feet long, or a Document carrying the Seals of 900 persons, cannot fail to be of some interest to fellow technicians; and even problems less exacting than these have their appeal: but we have not the space to consider them in detail here.\* On the other hand it may be worth while to set down three principles which, after some years of conscious analysis, we have concluded to be the absolute essentials: with some broad indication of the ways in which they work out in practice and the statement of one major factor which conditions all our work.

The first principle is the obvious one that the safe survival of the Document in its integrity over-rides all other considerations—not only ordinary ones of appearance, convenience or comparative cost, but those resulting from the application of other principles: if it comes to a conflict of principles this one must win. The second is that the inter-relations of Documents which are Archives being so important as I have described, anything which might bear on that subject—even mere contiguity, much more any form of make-up which attaches one Document to another—is part of the evidence

\* A good many of the special methods of make-up worked out in recent years at the Record Office—for instance those used in the employment of Boxes and Folders, in guarding and filing *Loose Papers*, in packing *Maps* and *Large Documents*, and in protecting *Seals*—are those described in my *Manual of Archive Administration* (second edition, 1937).



they have to offer and must be kept in being. The third is that the consultation of Archives for the purposes of research being the reason for which money is spent on conserving them, facilitation of their use must be (once their material and moral safety is assured) the Archivist's primary concern.

Succeed in reconciling those three principles with each other and with circumstances and you have solved your problem.

Of the surrounding circumstances which complicate the problem with difficulties of staff, finance and so forth, one, in the case of the Public Record Office, is predominant—the governing factor of which I spoke: *BULK*. The effect of the fact that in our case the Documents to be dealt with number many millions, upon the organization of operations which can only be done at the average rate of—say—fifty documents an hour, is a simple calculation which produces staggering results: take only one million and you have in any one operation a total of at least ten years' work for one man: take the contents of the Office and you may probably multiply your one man by fifty: think of the number of quite simple processes which you might like to prescribe as applicable (in the light of experience or of some new discovery) to the whole of the Public Records, or even to a substantial portion of them—some new and desirable methods of numbering, or stamping, or fumigating, or card-indexing, or enclosing in a folder—and you will get an even more devastatingly impossible total. Of course not all the processes I am thinking of are applicable to individual Documents: and if you calculate in terms of 'pieces' containing each two or three hundred Documents your total is very sensibly diminished. On the other hand, many of the operations to be performed in such cases (guarding and filing loose papers, for instance, or even boxing in folders) are not of a nature to be done at the rate of fifty an hour or even fifty a day: which redresses the balance again.

The first thing, then, that we have had to recognize in practice is that there is a considerable number of processes that, ideally, we should like to apply generally to the Public Records, or large tracts of them, which we must resign ourselves to applying only in certain Classes, or applying only to individual pieces as they are called for in the Search Rooms or otherwise come to notice, or even (where the process is merely desirable, not absolutely essential for safety) not applying at all until some date unspecified—probably the Greek

Kalends. This conclusion is reinforced by the reflection that our bulk is not even static: it is being increased continually—and increased, under modern conditions, at a much greater rate than formerly—by accruals: and although a certain amount of this additional business can be, and is, met by closer liaison with Departments (whereby some of the extra work which would otherwise be incumbent on us is done in the parent Department before transfer) the extent of this relief is limited.

Another thing we have had to recognize is the predominant necessity for economy. Economy in quality of material, or in workmanship, is generally bad policy because we want to be reasonably sure that a job once done can be put out of our heads and will not have to be done again: but economy in effort is, in view of the magnitude of our task, essential. Given, therefore, two possible methods of make-up, that one is preferable which can be applied with the least amount of labour and particularly labour on the part of our own strictly limited staff. In this connection we have rather specialized in devising forms of make-up—leather-board boxes, ready-made file boards, cloth-covered box-cases for limp-covered books and so forth—which could be manufactured in large quantities by commercial firms outside the Office to our own specifications; these last being specially designed to counteract the inferior standard of efficiency that usually results from substituting machine for hand working. Curiously enough (but very, happily) this preference for rapidity and quantity of output, discreetly exercised, has not been found to clash with considerations of convenience in consultation, strength or even economy in price: our adoption, for example, of a system of guarding and filing loose papers results in a unit which, while much more rapidly produced (our main object), is also mechanically much stronger, safer, not less easy to use and cheaper than the conventional bound volume: and I am glad to say two large Departments, which formerly bound their papers before transferring to us, have recently decided to copy our system.

The methods I have been indicating apply, of course, very largely to modern Documents where there is little more in the original make-up than (at most) a filing case and a string, the preservation of which produces no problem. Remain the cases where there is an original make-up of some pretensions or (even more difficult) an ancient make-up superseding the original. Our general rule here is that the

original form, unless it interferes with the safety of the Documents, must be reproduced (with, of course, due indications of its modernity) and sufficient specimens of the material and method of the intermediate stage preserved with it: the method of specimens is also adopted if considerations of safety preclude reproduction of the original. I fear I am allowing a favourite topic to run away with me: but perhaps I may allow myself one concrete example. About 1923, when the first General Survey of the whole of the Public Records from the point of view of repair was being made, I was a good deal troubled to find that practically the whole of the classes of *Admiralty Logs* (22,000 volumes) had to be set down as urgently needing treatment on account of advanced decay in the bindings and progressive deterioration of the contents: a binding problem which was practically insoluble. What had happened was that someone had brought together in each case, on no discoverable system, half a dozen or so of slim paper-covered books and bound them (most unsuitably; for they were of every conceivable variety of size) as volumes in leather more impregnated with free sulphuric acid than any it has been my misfortune to meet in a long experience. The apparently haphazard arrangement we could not alter—for it might after all have a meaning—but we broke the volumes up into their original limp-covered constituents and enclosed these (with the old end-papers, the leather lettering-pieces and the anchor stamps from the sides) in cloth-covered cases which were made for us in thousands, in varying sizes, outside the Office to a specification of our own designed to defeat the malignant quality of contractors' glue. The sewing of the small books was done by imported women's labour, the work of our own staff being confined to the break-up of the old volumes, the insertion in boxes, labelling and supervision: and within a few years the impossible had been accomplished.

But I am trespassing on my next section.

#### REPAIRING

Here again is a subject which deserves a treatise, though a good deal of what might be said on the question of principle has been stated already in the preceding section. Our governing rule is so far as possible to add nothing to the Document which was not there originally and take nothing away which was. In practice this means that when, as frequently happens, we must break this rule for the sake of

the safety of the Document, either the work itself or an added note must make clear what has been done ; that anything which is missing from the document is supplied, so far as possible, with material of the same make and quality (we use, for instance, a hand-made linen-rag paper) ; that no part of the Document itself may be destroyed ; and that at least sufficient specimens of every part of the old make-up (including all letters, numbers or marks upon it) must be retained and, if possible, embodied in the new. In the matter both of methods and materials we are frankly (some would tell you, excessively) conservative ; because of the difficulty, or impossibility, of undoing an operation once performed and of a distrust, confirmed by much experience, of laboratory tests: when lamination between sheets of acetate foil has been practised for thirty years and more without sign of deterioration in the foil it will be time enough (we feel) for us to think of adopting that process: meanwhile we acknowledge and envy its rapidity and cheapness and are indebted to our American colleagues for carrying out those tests by which (it may be) we shall some day be convinced.

As to our *Methods*\*—they are nearly all of our own invention though we have borrowed wherever we could: the use of silk gauze, for instance, from Italy and, for the moulding and repair of Seals, a little from several countries. Our *Staff* we prefer to train ourselves, generally selecting men who are found to have an aptitude from the Attendants who look after Students in the Search Rooms and supervise production in the Repository: there is not any parallel work elsewhere from which trained men could be recruited, though we find the value of having one or two skilled in other kinds of craftsmanship such as metal-work or carpentry. Supervision—though much experience gives our Repairers a great technical ability—is necessarily in the hands of an Assistant Keeper because in a large number of cases the question of what may or may not be done in repair depends on an ability to read the Document and understand its administrative significance.

The last remark applies also to a branch of the work whose importance really merits a separate section—the *Binding*. In this case previous training outside the Office is desirable, indeed almost essential: though, in the general mechanization of the so-called

\* In regard to the actual processes employed, see again my *Archive Administration*: also the description of exhibits in a demonstration given in 1936, in British Records Association *Proceedings*, No. 1.

binding trade, men with any real knowledge of true binding are increasingly difficult to find. Although we have discarded binding as a method of dealing with loose papers, there are still (and probably will be for many years) numerous modern series whose original make-up (before they are written) is the book form and these have to be re- (and better) bound from time to time: while in the case of the early Records, repair-binding provides a constant series of individual problems (too individual for me to attempt to illustrate them here) which call for a mixture of skill and inventiveness of a very high order. Only a man trained in high-class binding can attempt work of this kind but, on the other hand, one trained only in the conventions of library binding would find himself at sea and, undirected, might do great damage. Here again we have for many years been very lucky and are able to provide from our own staff both for special work and for the direction of Binders brought in from the Stationery Office for the more modern jobs: but the problem of succession is always with us. I have sometimes wondered (for the great Libraries have, in the preservation and care of their historic bindings, problems akin to ours) whether there is not room for the creation of a school of repair-binding upon which all could draw: on the basis of our experience at the Record Office, I would have the students taught a little joinery and saddlery as well.

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I pass to some brief description of a very large section of the internal activities of the Office—those which we include under the general title of 'Repository'. One of them has already been noticed by anticipation when I spoke of the 'Summary'; which is the peculiar care of this section.

#### PRODUCTION AND CHECKING :

##### WITH A WORD ON STOCK-TAKING AND CLEANING

I have already said by anticipation something of the method of 'producing' Records for inspection: but must add a few lines in description of the organization it requires. A very large and awkwardly planned building (the Search Rooms are not central and the conscientious Victorian Gothic of the architecture gives much unnecessary trouble) aggravates in this case the problem of Bulk; there is only one lift capable of taking a man and a truck; the Strong Room doors are nearly all badly placed in relation to the

presses and the staircases to the mezzanines inconvenient—in short, the whole lay-out dates from a period before Repository structure had been considered as a special problem. Administration inevitably suffers and envies its colleagues at Washington and elsewhere, owners of up-to-date Repositories. The method of production employed is itself straightforward—that of the registered letter: that is to say, that there is a signature at each stage. The Floor Attendant who fetches the Document gives a receipt to the Strong Room (it replaces the Document on the shelf); the Search Room Attendant gives a receipt to 'Floors'; the student gives a receipt to the Search Room Attendant: and, when the Document is returned, the process is reversed. The whole organization is controlled from an office near the Search Rooms. This system, involving the writing of a ticket and a pair of slips (not to mention an entry in the Search Room Register) for every Document produced, may sound elaborate but it is in fact a simplification of an older procedure and is, in our view, the minimum required for safety: and the general adoption of the Abbreviated References already noticed has reduced the writing to a fraction of what it used to be. For the last fifteen years one set of the Production Slips, sorted into order of Classes, has been preserved as an Index to Search Room Productions: so at this point our writings contrive a double debt to pay.\*

Actually the system, like that of the registered letter, is not (though it ought to be) proof against accident: and when, owing to some small fault in procedure, misplacement does occur, the cost in time and labour of tracing a Document lost amid so vast a mass (even supposing it to be successful) is such as to make almost any alternative preferable. Before the war the annual total of Productions rose as high as 90,000: and 400 represents a busy day's work.

An annual duty before the war of the Production staff—generally re-inforced by the Repairers and Search Room Attendants—was the Stock-taking. It occupied a week during which Search Rooms were closed and the aim was to check the contents of every Strong Room against its 'Block List'. The evacuation in the early years of the war and the return to normal in 1946 practically served the same end

\* I have described Search Room Production which constitutes the bulk of the work: other productions are on the same principle though the procedure differs slightly. Documents in the 'Index Room' already mentioned are produced direct by the Search Room Attendants.



—in fact served it in some ways more thoroughly: but the annual check will probably be restored in the near future. It is very valuable but (in view of the mileage of shelving already mentioned) very laborious practice.

One other duty which falls upon the 'Repository' division of the Department is the organization necessary to enable the Office cleaning staff to operate vacuum cleaners (not nearly so often as we should like: but the bulk of the Records and the smallness of the staff are once more our trouble) and—a much more difficult thing—the Ministry of Works to clean and paint regularly a proportion of the Strong Rooms. This last is a real problem for, apart from the labour of man-handling two or three hundred tons of Documents, with all due precautions to preserve their order and so forth, it involves, or should involve, the moving every year of the contents of a dozen Strong Rooms and—crux of the problem—their bestowal elsewhere. Our system of References makes it generally unnecessary that they should go back into the same rooms: but to conduct the operation at all means that one must have a certain quantity—should have at least eight—of the Strong Rooms always empty and conveniently distributed. We have not, in my recollection, ever had anything of the kind except immediately after the war: and I must not take space to describe the ingenious shifts by which, in the years before 1939, we did in fact manage to paint annually a dozen rooms. Cleanliness and movement are necessities for our Records and large new buildings, we know, difficult to come by at the best of times: otherwise it might not be easy to justify the expenditure of time and labour which the mere organization of this side of our work requires.

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So far *Safe-guarding*: we come now to the second part of our task, that of *making the Public Records available to the Public*, by means of Search Rooms, Publication, Reproduction and Exhibition.

#### THE SEARCH ROOMS

The most obvious way of making Documents available is to provide Students' Rooms; with the necessary accompaniment of staff to produce the Records and of Lists, Indexes and Books of Reference. The Record Office has three Search Rooms which have recently taken on officially their old informal names.



The *Round Room* (actually it is a highly Gothic dodecagon) provides for all 'Literary' searches; and can accommodate nearly fifty Students at a time, each with an individually controlled lamp: natural lighting is from overhead. During the last thirty years it has worked out a system and provision of Lists, etc., which enable the conscientious Student to do, if he wishes, all his work for himself. He has the printed official '*Guide*' to introduce him to the Records; he has the *Summary* already mentioned to tell him exactly what there are in each Group and a *Catalogue of Means of Reference*, arranged in the order of the Summary, to show him what Indexes, Lists, etc., there are for each Class and where, in the three Search Rooms or the Index Room, they will be found: he has, for every Group, manuscript, typescript or printed *Class Lists* to give him the references to individual pieces; and he has all the *Official Publications of Records* (of which more later) and a large number of Manuscript Indexes, etc. Actually, however, he very often takes the easier course of asking the Assistant Keeper in charge of the room or one of the Attendants to put him on the track, at least in the initial stages of his search. In addition to the above, the Student will find in the Round Room a *Card Index to Public Records printed in full*, a considerable selection of the volumes in which Public Records have been published privately, and all the more ordinary *Reference Books* for Chronology, Languages, and so forth.

The *Long Room*, with a similar but not so comprehensive provision, accommodates Searchers who come to see Documents for a legal purpose, paying fees, and Students who have special permits to see Documents not ordinarily open to Public Inspection: it takes orders for Office Copies and Photographic Reproductions, of which we shall have to speak later: and it is charged with the very considerable business of the Requisitions for Documents which depositing Departments may from time to time require to have temporarily restored to them for current use. The *South Room* (formerly the *Government Search Room*) takes any overflow from the other two and accommodates special cases—Students inspecting very large or very fragile Documents and so forth: it does not produce. The Canadian Government has for many years had special facilities here or in the Long Room for the preparation of a vast Card Index of Records relating to Canada.

In addition to the above work, a large part of the business of answering *Inquiries received by Post* is done by the Search Room staff.

*Rules* governing the conduct of the Search Rooms, the admission of Students and the fees payable are made from time to time by the Master of the Rolls and laid before Parliament. So far as the vast mass of Students is concerned, procedure is very easy: any British subject can obtain a Student's ticket upon an application signed by himself and some 'responsible person'; and foreign students have only the additional formality of an introduction through the Foreign Office. All Legal Documents are open to Public Inspection but a fee is payable (even by Students holding tickets) on those after a certain date. Departmental Records (as has already been intimated) are 'open' up to dates settled by the Department concerned in consultation with the Public Record Office: but one or two Departments allow access only on *ad hoc* permit. The List of Holders of Students' Tickets is very much due for overhaul: a new series of tickets has not been started for many years and at present over 8,000 names figure on the list. The hours of opening are at present as they have been for many years (save during the war, when a restricted service was maintained) from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on ordinary weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

#### PUBLICATION

Here, even more than in Administration, the Record Office inherits from the Committees and Commissions that preceded it. After the first shock of discovering that a large amount of valuable public property and the valuable information it has to convey is lying neglected, the immediate tendency and the most easy and interesting plan (the same phenomenon may be observed in the case of ancient monuments) is to turn to publication. A series of Commissions and Committees were accordingly set up between 1742 and 1830 for printing *Domesday*, for printing the *State Papers*, for printing the *Parliament Rolls* and *Journals*: and it is the principal criticism of our immediate predecessor, the 'Record Commission', not only that they took the same line, but that they took it without perhaps as much forethought as might have been both desirable and possible; looking (as Maitland put it) down "a long vista of Imperial Folios" without any very clear idea of where it would lead them and without paying much attention to the un-reclaimed thickets on each side.

To some extent Record Office publications were built upon the foundations thus provided; and indeed it would have been difficult to

deny that such admirable productions (for example) as the Chancery Enrolments edited by Sir Thomas Hardy ought to be continued or that the *State Papers, Foreign, Domestic and Colonial*, were well worthy of publication; nor is it a very graceful or grateful part to criticize the methods of one's predecessors. The Record Office has produced since its inception something like a thousand volumes,\* to the great benefit of Students, and there, it might be said, we should leave it: with a reference to the useful *List Q†* in which the Stationery Office classifies these and previous Record publications. On the other hand, looking back with the advantage of a hundred years of accumulated experience, one can discern a certain failure to view the problem as a whole; to realize a vastness (an increasing vastness, too) which could not be dealt with by way of 'straight' publication; and in particular, to hold the balance fairly between the various categories of Records and Interests. Moreover, two modern inventions—Typescript in its most recent developments and Microphotography—have altered profoundly the lines upon which the needs of Students are supplied. The present period of reconstruction—the first opportunity we have had since our centenary—makes it therefore desirable as well as opportune to review our policy, endeavour to fill gaps and perhaps institute some new forms as well as new series of Publications. It is with this reviewing and planning that we are at present pre-occupied; and it is with this accordingly that I shall deal in the brief remains of this section: leaving the Student to pursue the past publications of the Office in detail in the Stationery Office List already cited.

In the first place, then, it is the policy of the Department to confine its publications to the Documents under its own charge—and, incidentally, not to increase the latter by means of 'Transcripts' made elsewhere. The 'Rolls' series published by the Department between 1858 and 1911, in so far as it consisted (93 per cent) of *Chronicles, Year Books* and so forth preserved elsewhere, was from this point of view, a mistake: and the same must be said of the *Vatican* and other Calendars drawn from foreign Archives. This is not to say that they are not valuable—some of them (the Vatican series and the *Chronicles*) might almost be called indispensable aids to the Historian: but they are not part of the work the Record Office was

\* Including 631 volumes of the 'Calendar' type, 55 of the *Lists and Indexes* and 254 *Chronicles and Memorials*.

† Now known as *Sectional List 24*.

set up to perform ; and to produce them, with the staff and other resources at its disposal, has meant neglect of equally valuable material in its own keeping—to go no further, the six great medieval classes of Exchequer Records at present untouched.

In the second place, experience has shown, and indeed it is only logical on any straightforward interpretation of our duty of making available the Documents in our charge, that publication of selections is, for us, a mistake: what is required is that we should deal with the Records class by class and, having dealt, put those classes behind us and go on to fresh woods. The method of dealing may of course vary in elaboration with circumstances: it is even perfectly possible, as was pointed out many years ago,\* to combine more than one method in dealing with different parts of a single class: and that brings me to a third consideration, that of the different possible *Methods of Publication*: taken specially in relation to the modern development of typescript and photography mentioned above.

There are five recognized methods of publication (six if you include a full literal translation ; but that we do not use): the *Transcript*, which gives a full text in the language of the original ; the *Calendar*, which gives a full *précis* in English, intended to dispense most students from consultation of the original ; the *Descriptive List*, which endeavours to give without detail a general indication of the contents of the Document ; the *List*, as we have already described it ; and the *Index*. Without going into the possibility of sub-varieties of these, such as the *Calendar* in the language of the original, we may add one more possibility—the *Inventory*, which gives a full description of the contents of a class, its numbers, covering dates and so forth, but without particularizing individual pieces. The Department has published all the first five forms, at first as Appendices to the *Annual Reports* made, in accordance with the Act, by the Deputy Keeper but now for many years separately in two great series known generically as *Calendars* (which includes the *Transcripts*) and *Lists and Indexes*. The *Report* itself has been presented since 1922 in typescript. Other publications are the *Chronicles and Memorials* (the 'Rolls Series') and the *Schedules* already mentioned, editions of the *Museum Catalogue* (the latest, just

\* In the *Report* of a Committee on Editing published (1925) in No. 7 of the *Bulletin* of the Institute of Historical Research.

issued, in a new form and format) and four editions of the *Guide to the Manuscripts preserved in the Public Record Office*; this last being the nearest we have come to using the 'Inventory' form.

Four questions are principally exercising our minds at present and have been the subject recently of discussion with a Consultative Committee of Historians drawn from all the Universities. They are the cost of our volumes (which may now run up to four guineas); the comparative slowness of production (the extreme case is that of the *Calendar of State Papers Foreign* which in forty years has only covered, in eleven volumes, eight years of the reign of Elizabeth); the gaps in our production (I have instanced already the medieval Exchequer series but the absence of publications is much more noticeable, if not more important, when we come to modern Records); and the question whether modern inventions and modern transport should not suggest some changes of policy in the matter both of form and of distribution.

How far we shall succeed in dealing with any or all of these problems I must not here attempt to predict: shortness of staff, financial restriction and the general difficulty of getting printing done combine to make the present, unavoidably, a very bad time for work such as ours. I can only say that the problems are being actively examined and that some of the proposals made are actually in hand: the Deputy Keeper's *Report* will once more be printed this year; changes in the format of our volumes have been arranged for, which will not only mean, I hope, considerable typographical improvements but also effect economies; certain changes of policy in regard to Introductions and Indexes have been agreed which should shorten the space occupied by the first and the time taken over both; the possibility of supplementing the staff with more external Editors is being examined; five series of Exchequer Calendars have been planned (one is already in preparation together with an introductory volume) and their publication provided for; a new system has been devised for the *State Papers Foreign* (and perhaps for some other *State Paper* classes) which, while it will not dispense the Student from consulting the originals, will at least give him a clear idea whether such consultation is necessary and should make it possible for the Editor to cover the ground much more quickly and economically; and we are considering the

feasibility, in the case of the more modern Records, not only of using the 'Descriptive List' method but of making the results available in typescript in the great libraries instead of printing and publishing in the ordinary way. Obviously the multiplication of Descriptive Lists would greatly facilitate the increased use of Micro-photography: and that is, at present, perhaps the most promising line of development.

Naturally these and other new arrangements cannot all take form immediately: but in a few years, if external conditions do not interfere, they should begin to bear fruit. The policy is a long-term one: but that, in the case of series so long and a bulk so vast as those we have to deal with, is inevitable.

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION

The possible use of the camera, particularly in combination with special lighting systems, to reveal what is not perceptible to ordinary vision in a Manuscript is naturally one which we have always in mind: indeed the present heads of the French and the English National Archives were conferring on this subject at the Paris *Sureté* twenty-five years ago. But minute inspection of a single point in a single Document is a relatively small and unimportant part of our work because the vast majority of students of Records are concerned rather to read with reasonable speed through considerable series and have no occasion to look for palimpsests or study the *minutiae* of stroke-formation in individual letters. For us the normal uses of photography are two: to provide in a pictorial form as nearly as possible all that the eye would see in a Document or Seal, for the benefit of a reader who cannot come to the Office or for reproduction in a book; and to furnish the distant student with rough but sufficiently readable reproductions in large numbers at a cheap rate. To be fully effective, the rate for certain types must be so cheap that the Student can still afford to order quantities of reproductions from series of which there is no detailed index, even though he knows that a high proportion may prove on examination to have no value for his purpose. The preparation of Descriptive Lists described above will decrease materially the proportion of such unwanted reproductions in many orders but there must always be numerous Classes for which no Lists are available: here again the mere bulk of the Public Records is a dominant factor.



The first of the requirements I have named is met by ordinary ('Still') photography in all its forms, the second either by reproductions of the 'Photostat' type (reversed negatives made direct on to sensitized paper) or by Microphotography. The story of the employment of these processes at the Public Record Office is a long one: but, briefly, it has always been, till very recently, achieved by means of external experts working under official supervision, which naturally increased the cost to the Student considerably, unless he could import and operate his own apparatus.\* The elaborate installations for photostat and, later, for microphotographic work, were due originally to the desire, first of the Canadian Government and later of the Library of Congress,† to make comprehensive collections of reproductions of the Public Records specially interesting to students of their National History or even (in the case of the United States) students working in that country upon other subjects for which English Records were required. The microphotographic work began on an intensive scale during the war at the instance of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Library of Congress, the work being carried on by members of our Repairing staff both by day and (in the intervals of A.R.P. work) by night. At the same time the operation of the photostat machine was taken over by the Department and the use of photostatic copies for legal purposes was officially sanctioned.

The whole supply of photographic material of every kind has now become part of the official work of the Department; and while development of still photography must be regarded at present as in its early stages, that of the other two varieties has reached a high level, though embarrassed by a flattering increase in demands. Not to go into detail over questions of procedure in such matters as the control of copyright, the principles on which the work is organized may be stated in three sentences. First, our aim is to produce as nearly as possible in the case of photostat and microphotography, and absolutely (except for the actual colour) in the case of 'stills', all that the eye can see, a consideration which affects materially the speed of production and to some extent the question of the processes used: we are not primarily concerned to produce an agreeable picture.

\* The earliest work of this type was done by means of an ordinary camera with a prism attachment.

† More recently still the Government of Australia has embarked on a like project.



Next, since the provision of photographs is regarded as an extension of the facilities offered by the Search Rooms, they must be charged to the public as nearly as possible at cost price. Finally, the photographers should, in our view, be men trained in the handling of Documents and can therefore best be recruited from the Repairers; with supervision, once again, by an Assistant Keeper because adequate checking of the work normally implies reading.\*

Of the supply of reproductions along more popular lines, in connexion with the Museum, we have only made a beginning: but we aim at producing ultimately at least a large series of post-card facsimiles; and more ambitious plans may follow.

#### EXHIBITION

The early history of the *Museum* housed on the site of the old Rolls Chapel has been given in a note prefixed to the new 'Catalogue' which appeared very recently, and need not be repeated here: but a word must be said of the modern developments in its scope. For a number of years now it has aspired to do a good deal more than to satisfy a laudable but rather vague curiosity on the part of the general public in regard to the more spectacular contents of the Office, such as *Domesday*, the *Log* of the 'Victory' or the 'Scrap of Paper': it has catered increasingly for organized parties of all kinds, including many from schools, which are encouraged to come at times when the Museum is not normally open and are personally conducted by an Assistant Keeper. This service seems to be

\* There is one other aspect of photography upon which I have not dwelt but which must have a word in conclusion, if only by way of footnote. It is that of the photographs made by other people—the possibility of photographic materials, and especially microphotographic films, figuring themselves as Records—and this gives rise to two considerations. First there is a recurrent suggestion that, for the sake of economy, Records should be microphotographed and the film preserved in lieu of the paper. That is a suggestion which Archivists will probably always oppose on the ground of the inevitable possibility of error or diminution of information in such artificially made 'Records': they must certainly oppose it at present because there is no proof of the permanent quality of any kind of film. The second consideration is simply that some Departments being concerned officially in the production of visual or sound recordings, we cannot escape the necessity of preserving these as original and genuine Archives. Our Inspecting Officers have already had to deal with some classes of this kind and the special problems of their ultimate storage and use in the Record Office are beginning to exercise our minds: here again we shall no doubt have something to learn from the experience of our colleagues in America and elsewhere.

much and increasingly appreciated and we are at the moment arranging an extension of it in the shape of a special exhibition (illustrating the history of a particular county) for a special party. There is no doubt about the desirability of such a provision and little, I think, of its probable popularity: the only difficulties are those of finding the staff and time to make the necessary preparations for it and (still more) finding the room in which to house it.

A large proportion of the 'permanent' exhibits are now so well known that we found it very difficult when revising the Catalogue to select many which could be withdrawn without much risk of disappointment to visitors: but for some time it has been our habit to reserve two or three cases for temporary exhibits to illustrate (for instance) some anniversary. An extension of this has now been made possible in the shape of a small adjacent room which has been set aside for permanent Museum use and fitted with cases. This will be devoted as a rule to special exhibitions, suitably catalogued: which will be open for perhaps six months and in which some feature of the main exhibition will be expanded. For example, the permanent cases show two or three out of the large number of *Treaties* of all dates (about 5,000) which are preserved in the Office: and in the opening display in the new room, which it is hoped to have ready by early summer, about fifty more of these will be set out; giving something like a representative, though still small, selection from these very rich classes.

The Museum was cleaned and re-opened as soon as possible after the war and to some extent re-organized: but the up-to-date casing and lighting which it badly needs are awaiting happier times.

#### THE LIBRARY

A specialized library is an obvious requirement for many sides of the work I have been describing and some mention of that of the Public Record Office is obviously called for in the present connexion. Our library is based on a heritage from the old State Paper Office, the Record Commission and one or two other sources, but has been for many years systematically increased along certain lines: notably (for obvious reasons) along those of general English History, Family and Local History and Topography: with an adequate representation of such subjects as Law and Economic History and of technical works concerning not only Palaeography, Diplomatic

and Archive Science, but also other departments of Scientific Research so far as these touch Archive work. It has at present about 55,000 volumes.

The Search Rooms, which, as we have noted, have an independent provision of essential Reference Books of their own in addition to some thousands of manuscript Indexes, etc., occasionally, in special cases, borrow books from the Library for the benefit of Students: and a few persons not members of the Staff have the special privilege of using it: but it is not a public library. Difficulties of space and staff would alone be sufficient to forbid that. It is a question, however, whether plans for the future should not include an effort to make the collection upon Archive Science, especially in respect of foreign publications, a really comprehensive one and to open this as a specialist library of the subject (no such collection exists at present anywhere in England) to Students interested.

#### THE SECRETARIAT AND STAFF

The work of the Secretariat need not be particularized here: it is enough to say that, besides being primarily responsible for all *Correspondence*, it covers all questions of *Establishment* and *Accounting*; and in general co-ordinates the work of all the active sections of the Department which have now been described.

To meet the man-power requirements of these sections, including all recent developments and in particular the work at 'Out' Repositories, the Deputy Keeper disposes at present of a total staff of less than 150 of all grades: 21 Assistant Keepers, including a Principal Assistant Keeper and 5 Directors of Sections; 13 of the Executive Grade; 11 of the Clerical (including Typists); 1 Office Keeper (the "Superintendent"); 47 Attendants and Repairers; and 35 Porter Messengers, Cleaners, etc. Two of these Grades—the Assistant Keepers and the Attendant and Repairers—are not 'Treasury' Classes.

With so small an establishment it is inevitable that the Senior Officers should be called upon to undertake any or all of the branches of the Office work. Though, naturally, individuals tend to specialize upon branches which interest them personally, we cannot afford the luxury of the pure specialist: all must be capable of everything, the expert upon the medieval Exchequer turning if necessary to administrative work on the Records of Modern Departments or to

the supervision of Repairs. For one aspect of the work, however, they have in the past been supplemented by the employment of external Editors; and as I have indicated, we are planning at present a modest extension of this along new lines. For the Assistant Keepers (who are recruited by special examination from University graduates) a good knowledge of Latin is a *sine qua non* (that language having continued in official use in Records till the eighteenth century) and this members of the 'Executive' class do not as a rule possess: but there is a large and increasing amount of administrative work, and work on modern Records which make it probable that this class (a recent innovation at the Record Office) will figure more and more in our establishment. On the specialized nature of the skilled work done by the Repairers and Binders, and the way in which this class is recruited, I have already commented: they also are not a 'Treasury' class: their work resembles most closely that of 'Paper Keepers' elsewhere, but with additions.

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#### POSTSCRIPTS

The above concludes our brief description of the work of the Department as it arises out of the Acts of 1838 and 1877 and as it is concerned with the contents, present or future, of the Record Office: but to complete the picture, there are certain external activities and contacts to be mentioned.

In the first place legislation has added two *New Statutory Duties* in connexion with Records outside the Office. The first was the Amendment of 1924 to the Law of Property Act of 1922 which placed *Manorial Records* under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls; without defining exactly what those Records were or what the Master of the Rolls should do with them. The then Master of the Rolls met this situation by creating a Manorial Committee, seated at the Record Office—actually it consists in present practice of a Secretary (an Assistant Keeper) who, with a very small clerical staff, and consulting the Deputy Keeper and the Master of the Rolls when necessary, carries out the policy then laid down. This involves the making and upkeep of a central Index of Manors and of known Manorial Records\* and the administration of the Master of the Rolls' Regulations as to the custody of the latter either by their Owners (who are held in this respect to maintain the position

\* They are known at present in the case of something like 13,000 Manors.

of Lord of the Manor) or by Local Repositories, officially 'recognized' for the purpose, to which they may be transmitted: a large proportion of these consists at present of Public Libraries and the Records Departments of Local Authorities.

The second legislative addition was that made by the Tithe Act of 1936, which, in a wording copied from the "Manorial" Amendment, made the fate of *Tithe Records* similarly a responsibility of the Master of the Rolls and the Public Record Office. Since these Documents, in addition to the set in the custody of the Tithe Redemption Commission, should exist in copies in both Diocesan Registries and Parishes, and since the last-named prove often to have been lost or mislaid or neglected, and since the Regions for which they may be presumed to exist must number well over 10,000, the task is not a light one. Its exact working-out has yet to be fully settled but it involves, in actual work at the Record Office, an organization similar to the Manorial.

The second set of external connections are those due to a certain amount of *Official Work* which is inevitably undertaken though it lies *outside our statutory terms of reference*. The most obvious example is furnished by the *Historical MSS. Commission* which has been closely connected with the Department since its beginning in 1869 and has its headquarters in the Office: the Secretary is a senior Assistant Keeper who nowadays finds that its work gives him practically full-time employment: and the Deputy Keeper is the Acting Commissioner. The *National Register of Archives*, a recent but very vigorous development (which is attached to the Commission, though it has a separate staff), has also its quarters in the Office. A third activity which comes under the same heading is the advice and practical help in technical matters which during the last twenty-five years it has become increasingly customary for Local Authorities and private owners to obtain from the Department: in particular there is an officially supervised service of private repair work, undertaken by the Repairing staff out of office hours, which has assumed very large proportions.

A fourth activity which can hardly be said to have begun as yet, but which may assume large proportions, is in connection with *Socialized Industries*. The Records of the Commissions which are being set up for the conduct of these—and that means also the vast mass of Records of the private or semi-private institutions which they

will take over—are not (it has now been decided) Public Records within the meaning of the Act of 1838. On the other hand it has also been decided that semi-officially they may properly consult and ask help from the Public Record Office, perhaps in company with other interested bodies, as to the care and disposal of their Records: potentially, a large new activity for the Department. Another official connexion, parallel to that with the Historical MSS. Commission, will almost certainly come about if or when statutory provision is made for a public *Inspectorate of Private and Local Archives* similar to that which exists in so many foreign countries: a measure long desired and perhaps at the moment more near to realization than it has ever been during the last fifty years.

Finally, there are the *Connexions which are definitely Unofficial* and in many cases personal: many Officers, for example, take extra-officially a part, sometimes a very large one, in the work of Local and other Record-Printing Societies; and in many cases the Documents printed are Public Records: the work of the *Pipe Roll* and *Selden* Societies are outstanding examples. Apart from this there are a number of bodies whose work is closely allied both by its nature and by personal relations to the Department. Most prominent, perhaps, is the *British Records Association*, whose President is the Master of the Rolls *ex officio* and one of its Vice-Presidents the Deputy Keeper; and in the development of which since 1932 members of the Record Office staff have throughout played a prominent part. The Association was largely responsible for the institution of the National Register of Archives, mentioned above, and for a related body still in the unofficial stage—the *Master of the Rolls's Archives Committee*\*; charged with the duty of trying to bring about that legislation to create an Archives Inspectorate to which I referred in a preceding paragraph, and probably to give existing Local Authorities and other bodies new functions and responsibilities in regard to Records.

The possibilities here are very far-reaching: and in any case prophecy is not a function of this lecture: but with the constantly developing work of the Public Record Office must be at least remembered the parallel development of related activities outside it.

\* Most of the Committees of the British Records Association meet normally at the Record Office: as do also the British Committee for a Medieval Latin Dictionary—another body having close personal relations with the Department—and the Council of the Canterbury and York Society.



## CHAPTER VI

# THE PATENT OFFICE LIBRARY

By F. W. GRAVELL, F.L.A., *Deputy Librarian*

### FUNCTION AND HISTORY

The Patent Office Library is a State public reference library of industrial art. The complete official title of the Office, of which the library forms a part, is the Patent Office and Industrial Property Department of the Board of Trade. Industrial property, officially speaking, covers the ideas and methods evolved in industry, from the time of extraction, or harvesting, of the substances and fruits of the earth, until a manufactured product reaches the consumer; the concrete expression of these ideas and methods is seen in the buildings, plant and finished products of industry. The library is therefore concerned with agricultural and mineral products, in addition to those more properly called industrial products, and in particular with the products of men's brains in producing them. For nearly a century the library of the Patent Office has been engaged in collecting and displaying the records of the activities and progress of industry, and occupies today a position of great national and international importance as a library of technology and applied science.

The Patent Office was established by the Patent Law Amendment Act of 1852, following the impetus given to industry by the Great Exhibition of 1851. Section 29 of this Act required the Commissioners of Patents to provide specifications of inventions, and records and proceedings of the Office, for the inspection of the public, and it was in giving effect to these requirements that the library was opened under its original name, "The Library of the Great Seal Patent Office." It is interesting to note that Section 30 of this same Act permitted the Commissioners to present copies of their publications to public libraries and museums. In a report of 1856 the Commissioners announced that complete sets of all their publications had been presented to eighty-two libraries of Government offices, seats of learning and the principal towns of the United Kingdom, on condition that they were made open to the inspection of the public

daily, and free of charge. The claim is made in this report that these gifts, in most cases, laid the foundation of public free libraries where none previously existed, and led to the formation and extension of collections of works of technology in the libraries which housed them. The Patent Office with its library can therefore claim to be a pioneer in the field of free public libraries.

The library was opened to the public on 5th March, 1855, and from its inception the Patent Commissioners set out to form a collection of records which would cover the whole field of industrial activity. The statutory obligation was to provide for public inspection copies of all patents granted, but in their first report the Commissioners announced that they had established "a public library of research within the Patent Office, to consist of the scientific and mechanical works of all nations". From the beginning the printed specifications and other publications of the Patent Office, together with similar collections obtained from the British Empire and foreign countries, have formed the backbone of the library; but, parallel with this, an endeavour has been made to build up a representative collection of books and periodicals covering the whole field of the subject matter of patents, and industrial property. Much of the credit for the pioneer work is due to Mr. Bennet Woodcroft, F.R.S., Clerk to the Commissioners and Superintendent of Publications, whose personal library of science and art was first lent, and subsequently purchased, to form the nucleus of the book collection. The opening of the library met a long-felt need among professional men, agents of foreign and provincial inventors, and practical mechanics and operatives. So great was the public response that, within a few years, the overcrowded conditions of the library were the subject of numerous complaints, including a memorial presented to the Commissioners in 1862 by forty-six users, led by a member of Parliament.

The library began its existence in a long narrow passage under the Patent Office and was popularly known as "The Drain Pipe". The report of a Select Committee on the Patent Office Library and Museum in 1864 described the library as little better than a dark passage, in which there was scarcely standing room for readers. New rooms for the public library were opened in 1867 on the second floor of the Office, occupying a space 60 ft. by 49 ft., and finally, in 1902, the present building, occupying a site in the centre of the Office buildings, was opened. The building now in use covers an area of 140 ft.  $\times$  60 ft. and is 50 ft. high. Two galleries, 19 ft. wide, run

the length of the building on each side. The library was erected at a cost of £166,000. In spite of the generous provision of 1902, which included a large basement area and which has been supplemented by additional shelving in every possible space, as well as the use of large vaults in the Office itself, the problem of space has again become acute.

#### THE PATENT MUSEUM AND THE LIBRARY

A Patent Museum was formed and opened in 1857 at South Kensington in proximity to other exhibition collections. Some years later an agitation arose to secure the removal of the library to a site adjacent to the museum. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed "to inquire as to the most suitable arrangements to be made respecting the Patent Office Library and Museum". A most exhaustive inquiry was conducted and the report issued in 1864 stated that the library was most useful in connection with the work of the Office. This decision strongly emphasized the primary function of the library as part of the machinery necessary to the effective working of the Patents Act. The value of the library as an educational institution is considerable, but its function is that of a workshop and not a museum. The Patent Museum was transferred to the Science and Art Department on 1st January, 1884, in accordance with the provisions of the Patent Act of 1883. The statement of a witness before this Committee that the separation of the library and the museum would necessitate two libraries, one for purposes of legal administration and another to make the museum a proper educational establishment, accurately envisaged the differing functions of the Patent Office Library and the Science Museum Library as they exist today.

#### GROWTH OF THE COLLECTION

According to the estimate of Mr. Woodcroft in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1864, the library had then grown to a collection of 30,000 volumes, the specifications being "a very small part". By 1902, when the new building was occupied, this total had trebled, and at the moment the increase is nearly elevenfold to a total of over 326,000 volumes. Inventive activity has increased under the stimulation of improved legislation and the patent literature in the library now forms roughly one quarter of the total. British specifications now total nearly one-and-a-half million, and the figure for the United States of America is approaching two-and-a-half million. More than half the total collection consists of

periodical sets and the remaining quarter, or less, of textbooks and pamphlets. Included with the pamphlets is a representative collection of manufacturers' catalogues.

#### COLLECTIONS OF BRITISH PATENT PUBLICATIONS IN OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

A considerable portion of the library stock has been built up by the exchange of Patent Office publications for the literature of other bodies. The establishment of free collections of British patent publications in public offices and libraries throughout the United Kingdom, and also abroad, was entered into on a large scale by the Commissioners of Patents. In 1884 complete sets of Patent Office publications were being sent to 47 towns in the United Kingdom, and 70 public offices, seats of learning, societies, and places in the Empire and foreign countries. In addition, complete sets of abridgments of patent specifications were placed with 367 mechanics', literary and scientific institutions, whilst 75 other libraries, at home and abroad, were receiving minor grants of publications. At this time, 1884, each complete collection had reached a total of 3,960 volumes and cost the Office £4,150 per set to produce. At the present time the number of places maintaining collections is considerably smaller. The Office has regulated the distribution of its publications by a careful assessment of local demand. The increase in the size of patent collections has also compelled some libraries and authorities to reduce, or entirely withdraw, their collections. This enormous world-wide distribution gives some idea of the amount of literature received in exchange by the library. The foreign patent publications collection has been assembled on an exchange basis and many learned society periodicals have been acquired by the same method. A collection of United States Patent Office publications was sent to this country in 1855 when the library was first opened. It should, of course, be pointed out that the desire of the Commissioners to give the widest possible publicity to patents of invention was first and foremost; the acquiring of other publications by exchange was secondary. In this way a system of branch libraries of the Patent Office was instituted throughout the world and the parent library was able automatically to place on its shelves records of local scientific and industrial activity. These branches were placed in carefully calculated centres of inventive activity. Today, instead of

the maintenance of these many centres of patent information, industry is kept informed to some extent by the reprinting of abridgments, or lists, of patent specifications in the trade journals. This reprinting is permitted subject to the usual form of acknowledgment and to the depositing of a copy of each issue in the Patent Office Library. In addition to these sources of acquisition, a large number of periodicals and the bulk of the textbooks are purchased. A few items, particularly manufacturers' pamphlets and catalogues, are donated, usually in response to requests.

#### OPEN ACCESS SYSTEM

The system of allowing the public free access to the shelves has been practised in the library from the commencement. This was nearly forty years before J. D. Brown introduced the idea into municipal public libraries in the adjoining London Borough of Finsbury in 1894. This feature, coupled with the size and value of the collection, has given the library a position in the forefront of libraries of its kind. Witnesses before the Select Committee of 1864 spoke of the library as the best technical library in Europe, and a report of the U.S. Commissioner of Patents at that time described it as a technological library unequalled by any in America. Down to the present day every endeavour has been made to maintain this high reputation. The open access feature with the very minimum of formality on admission—the signing of a visitors' book and the depositing of bags and umbrellas in the cloak room—is still in operation, and the freedom afforded is greatly appreciated by all users. It is a matter of regret that for some years past a bottleneck in the binding of periodicals has necessitated the holding in reserve of many unbound sets, thereby restricting their usefulness. For the proper supervision of the reading hall and for the guidance of readers, certain members of the staff occupy prominent desks. Inquiries can be made at these points by readers in difficulty. Attendants are on duty to assist readers generally, and to supply them with books and periodicals unavoidably held in reserve.

#### PATENT SEARCH SECTION

The general arrangement of the library is in four main sections: (1) English Patents; (2) Empire and Foreign Patents; (3) Periodicals; (4) Textbooks. Limitations of space have made some overlapping necessary. The ground floor section at the

entrance is devoted to English patents. Alcoves at the side contain the numerical series of specifications from the year 1617 to date. The early specifications are reprints of originals now housed at the Public Record Office. Around the reading tables in the centre of the section are grouped the volumes of abridgments of patents. Searching in these volumes is the method provided in this country for the use of inventors or their agents. The abridgments are arranged in subject classes; the volumes in each class contain classified indexes to their respective contents. General indexes to the entire classification are available as a means of locating the exact field of search. The classification has been developed by the patent examiners in their official search for novelty. Two sets of abridgments are in current use, the first covering 1855-1930, which has 146 main classes, and the second from 1931 to date, which is a wider arrangement of these same classes into 40 groups. The official period of search is for fifty years, but earlier searches can be made if desired. A printed set of abridgments, mostly unillustrated, is available for the years 1617 to 1883. In this section there are also numerous name and subject indexes, and registers giving the cumulated information concerning patents, announced in the weekly *Official journal (Patents)*. The printed publications of the patent offices of Empire and foreign countries are arranged in alphabetical order of country on the galleries. Included in this arrangement is a duplicate set of German patent specifications covering the period 1897-1939, filed according to the Patent Office classification scheme of that country. The set was formed in 1910, when Germany introduced a revised scheme of classification of patents, and has been adjusted from time to time to agree with the various published amendments of the scheme. Annual printed classified indexes are available to cover the period from 1939-42. A class list of numbers of German specifications for the period 1943-5 has been compiled in the library to supplement the classified set. Duplicate sets of specifications in classified order are also available for Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. A general *Guide to the Patent Search Department* was printed in the library class list series. The first edition appeared in 1901 and the last (4th) edition in 1913. A key to the foreign patent classifications was also issued in this series, the last (3rd) edition appearing in 1915. The registration of trade marks comes within the jurisdiction of an industrial property department, and official journals advertising trade marks, and listing their



propriators, are included in the various patent collections. A weekly British *Trade Mark journal* has been filed since 1876, but searching under particular marks can only be done in the Statutory Register maintained in the Trade Marks Section of the Patent Office. No record of registered designs is available in the library beyond the file of weekly lists appearing in the *Official journal (Patents)* and an annual name index of proprietors. Further information on designs must be obtained from the Designs Branch of the Patent Office.

#### PERIODICAL SECTION

Next to the patent literature, the emphasis has always been on periodicals. Before the Patent Act of 1852 and the publishing of a Patent Office journal, patents and designs were made public through the medium of technical periodicals, such as the *Repertory of arts and manufactures* and the *Mechanics' magazine*. Complete sets of these journals were acquired, together with many sets of the transactions of learned academies and societies of the world. A total of nearly 9,000 titles has been reached in the periodical list. This list covers all periodicals from weekly to the very occasional. Of the total, about 4,000 titles were current in 1939 and it is hoped, with the resumption of normal relationships with other countries, to approach that figure again in the near future. The emphasis is placed on periodicals for two reasons. (1) The periodical article is generally the earliest form of publication of any new development (apart from a patent specification), and (2) the periodical article usually gives the most detail, and consequently is most frequently referred to in the literature of a technical subject. Textbooks are, in the main, summaries of development, and act as a means of consolidating information on a subject that has already been published in the columns of periodicals.

The indexing of periodical articles, in a library with a large periodical collection, has always been a matter of vital concern. Following the lines of the *Repertorium der technischen Journal Literatur*, a manuscript sheaf index was compiled in the library covering forty periodicals from 1666 to 1865. A total of 108,300 author slips were written by the compiler, Dr. Tollhausen, a translator on the library staff. The compilation was never printed, but from 1867-72 a translation of current contents pages of a selection of the leading foreign scientific journals was published by the Office fortnightly. The publication was provided with annual name and

subject indexes. It was abandoned owing to lack of public support and the library has not ventured into the field of periodical indexing since then. A certain amount of analytical indexing has been incorporated in the catalogue through the years, but this has gradually been discontinued in favour of the inclusion of printed periodical bibliographies in the various subject sections of the library. These bibliographies, which now form a valuable part of the collection, are to some extent based on the periodicals in the library. The Royal Society, for instance, made great use of the library in compiling its *Catalogue of scientific papers* and duly recorded its indebtedness in the preface of that monumental work.

Title lists of periodicals in the library were issued at intervals from 1861-90. Class lists with title indexes were issued in 1902 and 1906. The last printed periodical list to appear was in 1924. This was an alphabetical subject list, the periodicals being arranged chronologically under subject headings, a key to the classification of subject headings being given with the preface.

Periodicals which appear frequently are kept, in the first instance, in the central area of the ground floor, beyond the English patent section. Special boxes are used for these current numbers. The front cover title is pasted on the spine of the box to facilitate ready recognition, and the arrangement of boxes is by subject, following the general library classification. Under normal conditions, volumes are bound as soon as completed and placed with earlier bound volumes on the galleries. Bound periodicals are divided into two sections on account of size. The classified order is followed throughout the library in the periodical and textbook sections. A separate title index is maintained to facilitate the location of periodicals. The *Subject list of periodical publications*, already referred to, is maintained up to date on typewritten, loose-leaf sheets. The *World list of scientific periodicals* includes the Patent Office Library collection.

#### TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks occupy shelves in side alcoves on the ground floor. On the lower shelves of these alcoves there is a parallel collection of pamphlets and trade catalogues in special boxes. Some textbooks are located in special positions, or are kept in reserve, on account of size, age and rarity. The aim of this collection is to make it representative rather than complete. Greater liberality in selection is given to periodicals for reasons already stated.

## CATALOGUES

The first catalogue of the library was actually printed in 1856, but no published catalogue appeared until 1857. This first publication consisted of an inventorial list plus a consolidated name and subject index. A revised edition in two parts, (1) Authors, (2) Subjects, appeared between 1881 and 1883. The third edition of Volume 1 (Authors) was published in 1898. Volume 2 was never republished, but the last edition of Volume 1 included periodicals, encyclopaedias and biographical references formerly appearing in the Subject Catalogue. With the printing of the 1898 edition, a consolidated catalogue of entries pasted on loose leaves, similar to that still used in the British Museum Library, was commenced. A supplement to the 1898 Author Catalogue was printed and published in 1910, but subsequent supplements were only printed in limited editions for library purposes. The printing of these supplements at varying intervals, and the maintenance of the consolidated catalogue in the library, went on until 1930. Commencing with 1931, a "Recent list of additions to the library" was published in the *Official journal (Patents)* and, from that date until 1944, a card index supplement to the Author Catalogue was built up, by pasting on cards the entries cut from these lists in the weekly journal. The list still appears, but from 1945 the supplementary card index has been maintained by the use of a standard ruled card on which the entries are typed. This change of cataloguing routine permits of greater freedom of entry in the list of additions. The Subject Catalogue, issued as Pt. 2 in 1883, was the only one of its kind issued. In 1899 a series of printed *Subject lists* was commenced; fourteen subject divisions of the library were covered in the series. In addition, the series included guides to the patent and periodical sections. These lists were in two parts: (1) a general alphabet of subject headings, with entries in chronological order of the works, arranged under these headings, and (2) a key, or summary of these headings shown in class order. This date order is of material assistance to searchers for novelty and in historical research. It reveals at once the latest work and enables a searcher to confine himself within limits of date. The printed lists omitted class marks; an accession or inventory number was given which could be used at the library in locating any desired book. A new series was commenced in 1908, with the introduction to the library of a new subject classification. This second series preserved the alphabetical and key arrangement, but added new class marks

in both sections ; an individual work mark was also added consisting of the date, minus the fourth place numeral (e.g. 1908=908). The guides contained two distinct kinds of entry, one using clarendon and the other italic type. Clarendon entries indicated monographs, or works wholly or mainly covered by the heading ; italic entries referred to works of a composite nature ; the reference and class mark relating to the analytical entries appeared at the end of each entry in clarendon. Special location marks were added to the work mark for outsize publications, pamphlets, etc. The printing of these guides was unfortunately abandoned on account of expense in 1919, leaving some classes still unprinted. Sixteen subject groups were covered in this new series, representing more than half of the textbook collection. From 1927 a classified subject card catalogue has been maintained with an alphabetical index of subject headings. The subject list of periodicals issued in this series in 1924 was actually the last printed book to be issued by the library.

#### CATALOGUING RULES

The library catalogues follow a code of rules specially drawn up to deal with the type of literature received. The code is in the main an abridged edition of the Joint Anglo-American L.A. Code. The chief differences are that, (1) entries of works published under varying headings are brought together under the earliest form, and (2) periodicals issued by bodies, and which have form, and not distinctive titles, are invariably entered under the name of the body. The British L.A. rule of entering periodicals under the earliest name and referring from later titles is followed. The *World list* system of periodical entry under first word has not been adopted.

#### CLASSIFICATION

The classification of the textbooks and periodicals is distinct from the patent classification, which is designed to facilitate the work of an examiner making a statutory search. Patent classifications are built upon elements of construction and processes of manufacture, and employ characteristics of arrangement which are not adaptable to literature other than patent specifications. The scheme in use for books and periodicals is peculiar to the library and was introduced by Mr. E. Wyndham Hulme, a former librarian ; it is essentially an arrangement of the books themselves, and not a scientific or logical

scheme into which books are fitted. The estimate of two to three years for the work of reclassification, made at the time of introduction in 1907, proved over-optimistic. It was still unfinished when war broke out in 1914 and the complete change-over was not made until 1921. The scheme was called "a 'relative' system of shelf classification". In the words of Mr. Hulme, "the system is designed to meet the peculiar requirements of inventors, searchers, and others who, as a rule, are more deeply versed in the practice than the literature of their respective sciences". The notation is "mixed" and employs a combination of one or two letters, followed by figures read as decimals. The distribution of the letters and figures is, in general, an arbitrary one. Subjects are frequently distinguished by a change of the first or second letter, but no attempt has been made to show the arrangement or subordination of topics by the notation as a whole. The U.S. Library of Congress Classification Schedules were made use of freely in the drawing up of the original scheme.

#### SPECIAL PROBLEMS

The library has its own peculiar problems. The nature of the business done in the library brings many people who are scarcely within the "reader" category. They make only brief, and consequently frequent references to individual books. This results in much more activity and unavoidable noise than is usual, or desirable, in a library. Because of this rapidity and frequency of consultation, users are expected to replace the books they take from the shelves. A certain amount of disarrangement results, but to avoid it, by providing attendants for the purpose of replacing, would be a refinement in service that could scarcely be justified. Mutilations are a regrettable accompaniment of the freedom of access given to the public without question or guarantee, but, having in mind this absence of restriction and its value to all who use the library, the abuses are remarkably few. The same may be said of volumes and parts which disappear entirely. The restriction on the bringing in of bags and such like receptacles has been imposed for many years and is still maintained; this is accepted by the majority of readers as a small price to pay for the facilities the library affords. An endeavour is made to be as impartial as possible to all members of the public. The regular reader does not, in fact, get as much attention as the occasional comer, who, because of his lack of knowledge of the arrangement, demands more assistance in his search.

## PHOTOSTAT SERVICE

A Photostat copying service has been maintained by the Patent Office since 1918, in which year the first Photostat camera was presented to the Office by Sir Robert Hadfield. Apart from certain copies of certified patent documents, this service is confined to the reproduction, within the limits imposed by the Copyright Acts, of material in the library. Owing to paper limitations, negative copies only are supplied, but the pre-war price of sixpence per half-sheet remains unchanged. This service, which increased from a total of 154,979 half-sheets for the year 1929 to 637,900 for 1947, is now operating an entirely new installation, completed in 1948, with a potential output of one-and-a-quarter million half-sheets per annum.

## CLIENTELE

Early reports on the library described the clientele as being drawn from the ranks of "professional men, agents of foreign and provincial inventors and practical mechanics and operatives". Representatives of these types are still among its frequenters, but there appears to be a definite reduction in the number of the individual inventor type, in favour of research workers, attached to firms, industrial research associations and technical societies. Statistics of readers can be misleading, especially if consideration is not given to the actual time spent in the library; a reader adds one to the total whether his visit is for a minute or for the whole day. Most Patent Office Library readers do spend long periods at a time in the reading hall. Visitors are only asked to sign once a day. Seven and a half million signatures have been recorded in the visitors' book since the library was opened. From an annual total of 4,643 in 1856 (the first complete year), there was a steady rise in numbers to 159,744 in 1912; this was the peak year numerically. Numbers dropped during the first world war and rose afterwards to a figure approaching, but not reaching, the pre-1914-18 war period. The drop occasioned by the second world war has been recovered, but again, not altogether. These fluctuations are partly explained by the hours of opening. From 1886 the hours were extended from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. for the benefit of artisans at work during the daytime. A reversion to 4 p.m. was made during the first world war, and between the wars opening until 9 p.m. was instituted. Since the last war, evening opening has not been extended beyond 6 p.m. and it is doubtful



whether there will be sufficient justification for any further extension. Saturday afternoon opening until 5 p.m. was maintained during the last war and is still in operation, as it appears to meet a definite need. The average weekly attendance is now 1,700 with 1,900 as a peak figure. Before the war, with a later period of opening, 2,000 per week was the average with 2,500 at the peak periods. The figures quoted do not give any exact idea of the value of the library to the general public over the years. The changing types of readers go to show that, even with a reduction in numbers actually attending the reading room, the information provided is reaching a far greater number than ever before. In the past, individual inventors made their own researches. With the development of larger industrial undertakings and the formation of trade research associations, a few individuals were deputed to conduct researches for the many actively engaged in industry. The tendency now is for these few to confine themselves to actual research, and in turn to depute the bibliographical research work to an information officer or special librarian. It can thus be seen that the activity of a single bibliographical research worker in the library is the centre, or starting point, of the production of an enormous industrial concern.

The collection, embracing, as it does, the technical works of all languages, attracts a considerable body of foreign users. Industrial visitors from abroad gravitate to the Patent Office, and resident foreigners act as agents for their respective countries in connection with the library and Office. For many years a little coterie of translators lived on the meagre and precarious earnings, derived from the translation of technical articles in foreign periodicals received in the library, and hawking them round to editors of English trade papers. This type of frequenter has almost, if not altogether, disappeared.

#### WAR PERIODS

The services of the library were maintained throughout the war periods. At the beginning of the second world war some consideration was given to evacuation, but the problems involved proved too staggering to contemplate. The risk taken in leaving such a valuable collection in such a vulnerable position was great, but the many dangers were survived, thanks to the inaccurate aiming of our enemies and the efficiency of the Patent Office A.R.P. squads. The building suffered from bomb blasts, particularly during the flying bomb period, but the books remained at their action stations

unharmcd. The library was only closed on account of enemy action on four complete days during the whole period of the war.

### SPECIAL ITEMS

Special items of historical interest are included in the collection but they are too numerous to mention individually ; in any case the emphasis is rightly placed on the essential function of the library, as part of the Office commissioned to carry out the provisions of the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Acts.

### THE LIBRARY AND PATENT LITIGATION

Apart from the transfer of a few sets and items to other libraries, the collection has been maintained from the beginning without any discarding. This rigid conservation of material is very largely governed by the requirements of the Patents Act. An invention may be anticipated by a British or foreign patent specification which is not more than fifty years old, but outside patent literature, any document, no matter how old it is, published in this country before the date claimed by an inventor, may be cited in anticipation. The legal interpretation of the phrase "published in this country" is that the document has been available to the public in an effective manner. The Patent Office Library is accepted in law as a place which affords effective publication. The evidence provided by the library is particularly valuable in the case of foreign publications, which are stamped with the date on which they are placed in the library. The plea that a document "was on the shelves of the Patent Office Library" is an accepted ground of proving anticipation in patent legislation. The suggestion has been put forward that citation from other documents should be confined to fifty years, to agree with the period of search in patent specifications. Such a limitation might make it possible to reduce the holdings of the library. No general acceptance of this view seems likely at present, and, failing that, the library must presumably go on expanding and conserving, unless, and until, some limit is set to the period which the library is expected to cover in exercising its function as a repository of patent anticipation material.

### CONCLUSION

In a report of the Commissions of Patents, in their *Journal* of the 8th August, 1856, one year after the founding of the library, the

library was described as an important branch of the Office. Through the years this position has been well maintained, and the establishment of a public library in connection with the working of the Patents Act has been more than justified. The library has, without doubt, proved a valuable stimulus to invention, and has safeguarded the public interests by providing a collection of technical material, which forms the ground of appeal in questions of priority of date when the novelty of an invention is in doubt. In forming such a collection, the library has, at the same time, established a reputation as a scientific and technical public reference library of the first rank. Bibliographical research is now the acknowledged starting point of all successful and economical inventive research, and at this point the library stands today to give the inventor the direction he needs to fresh fields and industrial pastures new, and to save him from the paths of fruitless endeavour, down which the over-zealous explorer is often prone to stray, only to find himself, at last, in a cul-de-sac of prior publication.

A barrister, giving evidence before the Select Committee of 1864, fittingly summed up the value of the services rendered by the library in the functioning of the Patent Office in these words: "I conceive that the library is the most important thing of all because it is there you are to find the record of published inventions. What inventors want is to know what has been done before, and to be warned against their own ignorance. . . . The necessary information is to be found, first, in the specifications of existing patents, and secondly, in the books and other documents of that kind."

The recommendation of the Special Committee of 1864, that surplus patent fees should be applied to the proper working of the Act to the extent necessary, and not become a source of revenue, has never been implemented. To what heights the library might have risen, if the profits of the Patent Office had been ploughed in through all the years of its existence, can be left to the imagination; but even with the modest resources that have been available, the collection stands as a monument to the pioneers of patent reform of the last century, and occupies a unique position in the world of scientific and technical literature.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY

*By N. W. WILDING, Assistant Librarian*

The House of Commons Library can be said to have begun life in a house in Abingdon Street in 1800, which was leased for the Clerk of the Journals to share with the archives. The library was then merely a collection of journals and official documents, and it was not until 1818 that the buying of books which were considered useful to members was started. In that year a room 17 feet square was provided as a library in the Palace of Westminster. Unfortunately, those responsible were not familiar with the rapidity with which books increase and multiply—Sir Charles Barry was to make the same mistake in the present building—and this room was only big enough to last until 1827, when the library was moved to a larger room with an upper storey. It was then considered of sufficient dimensions to “answer not only for the present but for future times, and was to be large enough to hold all the Journals, Parliamentary Papers of Lords and Commons, the Irish Parliamentary Proceedings, the Debates and other books of Parliamentary authority and historical reference”. This it did quite satisfactorily until most of the old Palace of Westminster disappeared in the fire of 1834, when two-thirds of the contents of the library was destroyed.

Most people would expect to find a large collection of archives in a parliamentary library, but these were also victims of the fire. The only MSS. now possessed by the library are the MS. journals of the House, which cover the years 1547 to 1653. These are of great interest, as they include the remains of pages containing the entry for 18th December, 1621, which were torn out by James I *manu sua propria* and the recording of Charles I's ill-judged bearding of the Commons in his search for the five members.

After the fire of 1834, the library received a temporary home and £3,000 was provided to replace losses and extend the library on the lines already laid down. These were considered by a Committee of 1835 to be “a good and sufficient foundation for a Parliamentary Library of Historical and Constitutional Information”. Judging

from the collection of books which has survived, their ideal seemed to be what we should all recognize as the typical "gentleman's library" of the last century—plenty of folio volumes of the medieval chroniclers, eighteenth century genealogists, and nineteenth century archaeologists; the classics of course, and a mass of English and French history and memoirs which even in those days, when the display of erudition was popular in the House, must have been of extremely doubtful value. To illustrate the fact that the words "book-selection" meant rather less than nothing to our forerunners, a bequest of £400 in 1855 was spent on such works as Cuvier's *Oeuvres complètes*, a Biblia sacra polyglotta, and Sylvestre's *Paléographie universel*. The committee which approved these curious additions to the library of a legislative body included Lord John Russell, Monkton Milnes, Benjamin Disraeli, Sidney Herbert and Sir George Cornwall Lewis.

The new library designed by Sir Charles Barry in the rebuilt Houses of Parliament was of generous proportions—a chain of five rooms, 60 feet long and one smaller one, with windows down one side overlooking the river. Except in the Reference Room, which has a gallery, the bookshelves extend to about 16 feet from the floor. This necessitates the use of long and heavy ladders, and resulted in the less used books being relegated to the top shelves. This was all right in the days when a book was located by its shelf mark, but is a decided inconvenience now that the books are classified.

The functions of the library henceforward were mainly to provide a place where members could write their correspondence and speeches, to provide a complete collection of Parliamentary Papers, and to give information on questions which were the subject of debate in the House. These activities were not greatly extended until the adoption of the Report of the Select Committee in 1946.

The library comes under the Speaker's Department, and he is concerned with the appointment of the staff and the administration of the library. He appoints the members of the Library Committee, which meets two or three times a year to discuss general policy and to receive progress reports from the librarian and assistant librarian.

As the library is so much concerned with Parliamentary Papers, perhaps a few words about these would be of interest to other librarians. There are three types of paper which appear each day in the "Votes and Proceedings" as being "presented" or "laid on the Table"—Command Papers, House of Commons papers, and

unprinted Papers. Command Papers (white papers and blue books) are expositions of government policy, Reports of Royal Commissions, state papers, etc., and cover subjects of general interest, while House Papers are concerned with purely domestic affairs, such as reports of Commons or Lords Committees or joint committees of both Houses. When the House is in recess, the librarian has to authorize the printing and distribution of Command Papers, and when corrections or additions are made he has to decide whether they are of sufficient importance to necessitate the re-presentation of the paper or whether the issue of errata slips is permissible. The official index to these Command and House of Commons Papers (and Bills) which is published by the Stationery Office is prepared by the library. The Unprinted Papers are reports and accounts of bodies which are required by Statute to render an account of themselves to Parliament. "Unprinted" refers to the fact that these papers are not printed as government publications—they may or may not be printed by the people responsible for their issue. They include such papers as the Report and Accounts of Queen Anne's Bounty, the annual reports of B.O.A.C. and of course that entertaining series now known briefly—but not affectionately—as S.I.

The reorganization of the library really began when the late librarian, Mr. J. V. Kitto, C.B., C.B.E., was appointed in 1937. Unfortunately the war and the necessity for removing a large number of books to the safety of the Bodleian Library, rendered any further progress impossible.\* As soon as the war was over, the efforts of the librarian and Mr. Saunders, who was then assistant librarian, resulted in the appointment in 1945 of a Select Committee on the Library. Their First Report appeared in November, 1945, and the second in March, 1946, and their chief recommendations were:

That steps should be taken immediately to fill deficiencies in the contents of the library on certain subjects;

That the preparation of a card-index catalogue should begin immediately. (This meant recataloguing the library and dispensing with the printed catalogue and its supplements);

That two additional assistant librarians with special qualifications should be appointed as research assistants;

That eight unused cellars should be converted and air-

\* The only damage suffered by the library during the air raids was caused by an A.A. shell, which came through a window and seriously damaged two large folio books on Russian topography.



conditioned, and used as stack-rooms for the lesser-used books and back numbers of newspapers and periodicals ;

That galleries should be provided in three of the library rooms to increase the amount of shelving and provide greater accessibility ;

That the staff should be radically reorganized ; and

That the present limit of £1,200 a year for books and binding be removed, and that the librarian should be permitted to purchase books direct from the publishers instead of through the Stationery Office.

In less than three years, under the leadership of Mr. Hilary Saunders, who was promoted to librarian in March, 1946, we have increased the staff from 7 to 21 and succeeded in carrying out nearly all the Committee's recommendations, with the exception of the structural alterations, which in these days is not particularly surprising.

The achievements so far include :

- (1) The cataloguing of 12,500 books on cards with author and subject entries and the re-arrangement of the entire library so as to give one room up to a Reference Library. (Besides providing an information service, this section has charge of nearly 900 periodicals and over a 100 newspapers, covering the Dominions, Europe and America) ;
- (2) the weeding out of 4,000 books for relegation to the book-store. Many of these are scarce and valuable, but of doubtful use to a parliamentary library ;
- (3) the formation of a Research Section which deals with the more abstruse information required by Members and is also responsible for the series of bibliographies on current affairs for which there is a growing demand ;
- (4) the creation of a Statistical Section in charge of two qualified statisticians who are already dealing with a large number of inquiries ;
- (5) the completion of the work on the cellars to fit them for book-storage ; and
- (6) the inauguration of a borrowing system for Members.

The expansion of the services provided by the library has created the inevitable demand by Members, and it was extremely fortunate that this expansion coincided with the election of a new Parliament, many of whose Members were unfamiliar with the sources of information essential for the performance of their parliamentary duties.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE LIBRARY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

By CHARLES T. CLAY, C.B., *Librarian*

It was not until the year 1826 that any active steps were taken to supply a library for the House of Lords. In that year a librarian was appointed, and Sir John Soane was instructed to fit up a room for the accommodation of a library. At first the books consisted of little more than a collection of Reports and Parliamentary Papers, most of which were transferred from the Parliament Office. In 1827, however, the librarian obtained authority to spend over £900 on the purchase of books and binding. This collection, of which a printed list is in existence, was chiefly of a legal character; and it was increased in the same year by the gift of the Earl of Rosslyn, who presented the law library which had belonged to his father and to his great-uncle, Lord Chancellor Loughborough.

In 1834, when the Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire, the House of Lords Library was thus only eight years old, and was of comparatively small extent. It is recorded that while the fire was raging the books were passed along a file of soldiers to St. Margaret's Church, and that all were saved.

After the fire the importance of the library was more fully recognized. The four rooms overlooking the river, which now form the main library, with a range of small rooms below for storage, were part of Sir Charles Barry's designs for the new Palace of Westminster. They were ready for occupation in 1848. In the meantime an important gift had been received from the French Chamber of Peers. This consisted of nearly 2,000 volumes in the French language, mainly of a parliamentary character with a large number of historical works and memoirs. Gradually the policy was adopted, which has been continued to the present day, of building up a good general library on the legal and parliamentary basis. On this general side preference has been given to such sections as English literature and history in its widest sense. Nor have the classics and a selection of books on theology and art been overlooked; but fiction in the accepted use of the term has never taken any prominent part.

In 1856 Lady Truro, whose husband had been Lord Chancellor from 1850 to 1852, presented his law library. This collection, most of which is preserved as a separate entity in what is known as the Truro room, consists of about 3,000 volumes. It includes not only the law reports and legal textbooks ordinarily used by a lawyer of the first half of the nineteenth century, but also considerable sections on the history of law and of parliamentary institutions. The gem of the collection is a fine copy of Statham's Abridgment which was printed for Richard Pynson by Guillaume le Talleur at Rouen about 1490; and a large number of volumes and several pamphlets are of sixteenth and seventeenth century dates.

Among the many other gifts which have been received, one in particular should be recorded. This is Sir William Frazer's bequest, made effective in 1899, of eleven folio volumes of Gillray's political caricatures which contain several items of special rarity.

The library possesses complete sets of the Journals of both Houses; and among the printed Parliamentary Papers there is a comparatively unknown collection of thirty-one volumes of House of Lords Papers covering the years 1788 to 1805. There are also a set of such Private Acts as were officially printed from the year 1718; sets of Parliamentary Debates in various forms; and special sections relating to legal and parliamentary history. The series of printed Appeal Cases heard before the House of Lords dates from the year 1702. Another section, extensive in its scope, consists of books on the specialized subject of Peerage Law, including the proceedings in Peerage cases, both printed and in manuscript. The printed cases date from the early part of the eighteenth century; and among the manuscript material are four bound volumes of reports prepared by the late J. H. Round, of which a detailed calendar is given in his *Family origins* edited by the late William Page. Special acquisitions for the legal side of the library during the last few years include complete sets of Lloyd's List Reports and of the Harvard Law Review and periodicals of a similar kind.

Among a large number of sets of publications issued by historical and other societies are those of the Pipe Roll, Canterbury and York, Navy Records, Surtees, Champlain, Wren, Selden and Stair Societies. In some instances a subscription has followed a gift of sets of earlier volumes. The library also possesses a practically complete set of the publications issued by the Commissioners on the Public Records and by the Public Record Office. Several series of

pamphlets include the collection of tracts, mainly relating to Ireland, which belonged to the third Sir Robert Peel and was purchased for the library in 1897. It consists of 287 bound volumes and the contents are for the most part of eighteenth-century date. They were catalogued in detail for one of the printed appendixes to the general catalogue.

This catalogue, which is exclusive of the legal section, was printed in 1908; and slips have been inserted giving the additions to 1913. For subsequent additions the card-index system has been used. There is a separate card-index catalogue for the legal section, both on an author and subject basis. The total number of volumes in the library is in the region of eighty thousand.

From time to time there have been disposals of duplicate and redundant books. But these have to be made with care. Even apparent duplicates cannot be discarded with impunity. It was found recently in examining copies of the second edition of Stair's *Institutions of the law of Scotland* (1693) that there were at least three separate issues of that edition, a fact which appears to be unrecorded.

Today the library performs several related functions. It is used for the legislative work of a Second Chamber, and for the varied needs of Members of the House of Lords. It supplies the books, sometimes in great numbers, for the judicial work of the House as the supreme Court of Appeal in Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and especially of late years it has acted practically, though not perhaps nominally, as a departmental library for the Lord Chancellor. In certain instances facilities are provided for those engaged in special lines of research who wish to consult books which are not available in the British Museum or elsewhere.

When the House of Lords is not sitting for public business, visitors are shown a selection of manuscripts displayed in the Queen's Room. Most of these form part of the large collection of House of Lord's manuscripts which are stored in the Victoria Tower in the custody of the Clerk of the Parliaments. One case contains the original letter of Charles I to the House of Lords in 1641, pleading for Strafford after his attainder; the warrant for the execution of the King, signed by Oliver Cromwell and other members of the Court set up for his trial, which was produced at the trial of the regicides by Colonel Hacker, the first of the three officers to whom it was directed; and the declaration from Breda signed by Charles II on the eve of the Restoration. A second case includes commissions for

the prorogation of Parliament signed by Henry VIII, Edward VI, Elizabeth and James I, the last three with the Great Seal attached; the original Act embodying the Petition of Right of 1628, showing the cut which removed the King's conditional approval; Letters Patent signed by Richard Cromwell as Protector; and the draft in the King's own hand of a speech delivered by Charles II. In a third case is one of the original Articles of Union between England and Scotland signed in 1706 by the Commissioners of both countries, headed respectively by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor of Scotland. A fourth case contains the manuscript Prayer Book formerly attached to the Act of Uniformity of 1662, which is known as the "Annexed Book" and is the authority for our present Prayer Book; together with the Prayer Book of 1636 with the alterations and additions made in the handwriting of William Sancroft, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who acted as secretary to the committee of revision in 1661. A fifth case contains a holograph letter of James I to Cecil; a petition written in 1642 by Archbishop Laud on behalf of the library at Lambeth Palace; a letter to the Speaker of the House of Peers written by Prince Rupert in 1646 and signed by him and Prince Maurice; and, of special interest, some of the letters written by the King and the Queen which were captured by Fairfax in the King's cabinet at the battle of Naseby in 1645. Another case contains the Cranmer Bible which lay on the table of the House of Lords from Tudor times and was rescued from the fire of 1834.

In concluding these notes it is fitting to record with feelings of thankfulness that during the war of 1939-45, although the library was in the immediate zone of damage, no harm was caused to any of its books.

## CHAPTER IX

# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES

*By D. W. KING, F.L.A., Deputy Librarian, War Office*

A preliminary survey of government departmental libraries produced for private circulation by the Treasury Organization and Methods Division three years ago listed some thirty libraries attached to government departments in London. Notes supplied to the present writer by Dr. A. J. Walford of the Ministry of Defence, list an additional nine or ten. It will obviously not be possible to give a detailed account of every one of these forty libraries in this brief survey. Nor for that matter will it be necessary, for while some possess imposing collections running to many thousands of volumes, others contain little else than sets of departmental manuals and similar publications. But whatever the character of the libraries under review, no effective survey can be made without giving some general indication of the functions they perform and the type of material they contain. It must be appreciated that they are "special organization" rather than "special subject" libraries. As Linda Morley explains, "The special organization library in corporations, government agencies [departments], etc. . . . has peculiar administrative problems flowing out of this affiliation. The ultimate objectives of such libraries are those of the parent organization by which they were established and financed. . . . The subject librarian has a predetermined subject for which he seeks individual clients . . . the organization librarian . . . has a predetermined clientele for whom he seeks subjects and specific information."\* In brief, the object of a departmental library is to serve the staff of the department of which it forms part. Given this objective it necessarily follows that the library's acquisitions are based on the requirements of this staff. The fact that most departmental libraries do contain "special subject" material of interest to students and other members of the general public is incidental to their purpose.

\* *Journal of documentation*, Vol. III, 1947, pp. 24, 25.



The first task of a departmental library is to provide a well-balanced collection of literature on all subjects relating to the department's immediate field. This will, of course, include all the publications issued by the department itself. In the case of certain offices these number thousands.\* It will include, too, the publications of administrative departments performing similar functions in the dominions, colonies, and in some cases even, foreign countries, together with a good selection of non-official literature. But no departmental library functions efficiently if it confines its acquisitions solely to the department's immediate field. There is a general basic stock every library must possess—sets of public general acts, statutory rules and orders, parliamentary debates and sessional papers, etc. In addition, the needs of each of the department's special branches must be met. The War Office Library, for instance, provides clergy lists for the army chaplains branch, the Ministry of Works Library books on heraldry for the branch concerned with the decoration of streets and public buildings on ceremonial occasions.† Lastly, the departmental library has educational work to perform. The Assheton Committee on the Training of Civil Servants, which reported in 1944, drew attention to the part the library could play in staff training by the provision of suitable reading material. Most departmental libraries now have stocks of introductory books on the machinery of government, public finance, and other aspects of national administration, for the use of new entrants to the service.

A large proportion of the libraries under review issue bulletins and circulars to publicize their contents. These publications usually take the form of a duplicated monthly or quarterly accession list—in some cases with a supplement giving recent periodical articles of interest to the department. Most are information sheets only—short titles only are given and the books are arranged in broadly classified or subject groups. Three departments issue printed accession lists, and three or four include notes and book reviews in their bulletins. Certain of the older departments have published printed catalogues—the most recent is the dictionary catalogue of the Foreign Office Library issued in 1926.

Though departmental libraries exist primarily to serve the staff

\* The publications issued by the War Office fill over 500 feet of shelving in the departmental library.

† It is the practice in most departments to issue specialist books of this character to the branch concerned, on long loan—the library only recalls them when they are required for reference in another section of the office.

of the offices of which they form part, most are prepared on occasion to make their resources available for reference by outside inquirers. A few admit members of the public as a normal practice, but the majority prefer to deal only with *bona fide* inquirers seeking specific information within the department's field. Even among the libraries which do not normally admit outside inquirers, few, if any, would refuse applications from suitably sponsored research workers. Borrowing facilities are usually restricted to officials of the department, the only normal exceptions being loans made through the librarians of other government establishments, or of institutions of standing connected with the department's work. Hitherto only one library\* has been prepared to loan books through the National Central Library, but five† now participate in the new Science Library supplementary loan scheme.

In dealing with individual libraries pride of place must be given to those of the older departments (the Treasury, the Home Office, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Board of Trade, the War Office, the Admiralty, Customs and Excise, etc.). These libraries date back at least to the early years of the nineteenth century, and in the course of years valuable collections numbering many thousands of volumes have been built up.

The Combined Library of the TREASURY AND CABINET OFFICES at Great George Street contains some 70,000 books and pamphlets. A large proportion of the stock is made up of official publications—this is one of the few libraries which possesses a complete set of sessional papers. The non-official literature is mainly devoted to finance, economics and the various aspects of public administration. Sub-libraries exist in the Cabinet Central Statistical Office and the Treasury Organization and Methods Division. The material they contain is strictly related to the sections they serve. A printed catalogue in two volumes (one author, the other subject) was published in 1910. A duplicated circular listing new material added to the main and sub-libraries is issued monthly. The Treasury Library is not normally open to the public, but students may be admitted in special circumstances. There is an independent library containing material on staff training and related subjects attached to the Treasury Training and

\* The former India Office, now Commonwealth Relations (Indian Section) Library.

† Agriculture, Supply, Town and Country Planning, War Office, Works.

Education Division. The office of the TREASURY SOLICITOR has a law library at its headquarters at Storey's Gate.

The Library of the HOME OFFICE in Whitehall contains some 25,000 volumes. Among the subjects covered are law and legal administration, criminology and law enforcement, child welfare, etc. The stock includes complete sets of public general and local acts, sessional papers and reports, etc., as well as a number of sixteenth and seventeenth century books—the latter an indication of the distant origin of the department. A duplicated monthly accession list is issued. This library is not open to the public. Non-official visitors are admitted only when sponsored by a senior officer of the department.

The Library of the FOREIGN OFFICE, now linked with the Research Department under one director, is housed with that department in Princes Street. This library's functions differ materially from those of other offices—its various sections and their work are set out in detail in the Foreign Office List.\* The Library of Printed Books, the section with which we are directly concerned, contains about 100,000 books and pamphlets covering all aspects of international law and relations. A dictionary catalogue was published in 1926. A printed circular, listing new acquisitions and periodical articles of interest to the department, is issued weekly. The Printed Library exists primarily for the use of the department, but approved students may be admitted to consult works not available elsewhere.

The Library of the COLONIAL AND COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICES is now in the process of reorganization. Colonial official publications have been transferred temporarily to Church House and Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street. These and other publications relating to the colonies will eventually be housed in the new Colonial Office building on the Westminster Hospital site. The literature dealing with the dominions is to be retained in the Commonwealth Relations Office in Downing Street. The total stock amounts to well over 90,000 volumes, and constitutes one of the best collections of material on the colonies and dominions in existence. The legal section, which contains complete sets of colonial acts and ordinances, is used extensively by other departments. The library

\* See also the chapter on the library in Tilley and Gaslee's book on the Foreign Office in the Whitehall series.

publishes a monthly evaluative booklist for private circulation within the office. A printed catalogue was issued in 1896, and a supplement in 1907. Though primarily intended for official use, the Colonial Office Library is available for reference by students of colonial affairs.

The Library of the COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE (INDIAN SECTION), formerly the INDIA OFFICE Library, in King Charles Street, more nearly resembles the national libraries described in other chapters of this book. The holdings amount to some 230,000 printed books and 20,000 pamphlets, and include a large number of works in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and modern Indian languages. Every aspect of Indian life—cultural, historical, religious, sociological and administrative—is covered by the library. The conditions of admission for non-official visitors are similar to those of the national libraries.\*

The BOARD OF TRADE Library at I.C.I. House, Millbank, possesses some 100,000 volumes. As is the case with most of the older departmental libraries, the stock includes complete sets of sessional papers and similar material. The general literature covers all aspects of trade and industry. The libraries of the Raw Materials Division and the Export Promotion Department (formerly the Department of Overseas Trade) have recently been absorbed in the main library. Though primarily for official use, the Board of Trade Library is prepared to admit non-official inquirers.

The Library of the WAR OFFICE, in Whitehall, contains over 150,000 books and pamphlets. Besides an exhaustive collection of British and foreign works on military subjects, it has a good selection of books on history, topography and technology. The military collection includes a large number of sixteenth and seventeenth century books, and an almost complete set of United Kingdom, dominion and colonial regimental histories. The books on geodesy and surveying which form one of the most representative collections on these subjects available, are housed for convenience at the Survey Production Centre, West Twyford. A printed catalogue in three volumes was published during the years 1906 to 1912, and annual supplements were issued up to

\* The future of this library is under consideration. For a detailed survey see *The Library of the India Office* by A. J. Arberry (1928). A list of the printed catalogues is given in the appendix.

1940. The library now issues a printed monthly accession list, a monthly information sheet for military librarians, and a series of subject booklists. Though the War Office Library is primarily for official use, members of the public may be admitted on application to the librarian.

The ADMIRALTY Library, at Admiralty Arch, has a large collection mainly concerned with the historical aspects of naval affairs. A printed catalogue was published in 1911. Students and research workers who wish to use this library must make application to the Secretary of the Admiralty. Scientific and technical literature is dealt with in the Admiralty by the Centre for Scientific Information and Liaison at Fanum House, Leicester Square. (This branch participates in the Science Library supplementary loan scheme.)

The CUSTOMS AND EXCISE Library at City Gate House, Finsbury Square, contains two distinct types of material—modern technical works on articles and trades subject to indirect taxation and valuable record material of interest to the student of social history and the local antiquarian. Members of the public may be admitted on application to the librarian.

Though the GENERAL POST OFFICE is one of the oldest departments, its library, housed at Headquarters Building, St. Martin's le Grand, is of comparatively recent date. The bookstock, which amounts to some 7,000 volumes, includes material on all subjects of concern to the staff of the department. Printed accession lists are issued at intervals. The library's holdings also include the department's records. Outside inquirers may use the library both to inspect the records and to obtain information on the work of the Post Office. There is also a technical library at the Post Office Research Station, Dollis Hill, which is not open to the public.

We next come to the libraries of the departments formed during the course of the nineteenth century (Education, Agriculture, Health, Scottish Office, Inland Revenue and General Register Office):

The Library of the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, at Curzon St. House, contains some 80,000 books and pamphlets—the most comprehensive collection of literature in its special field in the country. Recent acquisitions are listed in a duplicated bulletin issued four times a year. Members of the public have access

to this library for reference purposes, and a reading room is provided.

The MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE'S\* Library at St. Andrew's Place, Regent's Park, contains well over 30,000 volumes. All branches of agriculture and allied subjects are covered, and the stock includes a valuable collection of early works. A duplicated bulletin, listing recent accessions and periodical articles of agricultural interest, is published monthly. This library is open to the public.

The Library of the MINISTRY OF HEALTH, in Whitehall, has a stock of about 100,000 volumes. The collection of official publications is of particular importance, for it includes much material not readily available elsewhere (e.g. local acts, statutory rules and orders of local application, etc.). There is a special section devoted to medical works. A duplicated accession list is issued monthly. Though this library is normally restricted to official users, visitors seeking specific information are admitted.

The SCOTTISH OFFICE has a small collection of books relating to Scotland at Fielden House, Great College Street, where the law library of the LORD ADVOCATE'S DEPARTMENT is also located. (The libraries of the Home, Agriculture, Health and Education Departments of the Scottish Office are at Edinburgh.)

The Library of the BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE, at Somerset House, comprises some 20,000 books and pamphlets dealing with taxation and related matters. Its use is restricted to officials of the Board. Also at Somerset House is the library of the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, with a stock amounting to some 7,000 volumes. Its collection of British and foreign census returns and reports on vital statistics is probably unique. A duplicated accession list is issued at intervals. This library is open to the public.

Of the libraries of comparatively recent origin, six belong to departments which came into existence prior to the outbreak of the Second World War (Air, Labour, Pensions, Transport, Assistance Board and Scientific and Industrial Research):

The AIR MINISTRY Library contains about 37,000 books and pamphlets, housed partly in King Charles Street, Whitehall, and

\* The FORESTRY COMMISSION, which is now linked with the Ministry of Agriculture, possesses a small library—mainly devoted to works on British forestry.



partly at Adastral House, Kingsway. The stock covers all types of material of concern to the Royal Air Force. A duplicated monthly accession list is issued. This library is not open to the public, but permission to use it may be given to suitably sponsored persons engaged in approved research work. (The METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE, which is attached to the Air Ministry, has its own library, a collection of some 42,000 items, housed at Headstone Drive, Harrow.)

The MINISTRY OF LABOUR Library, in St. James's Square, contains some 30,000 volumes covering the whole field of labour conditions and industrial relationships. Use of the library is reserved to officials, and outside inquirers are only admitted if sponsored by a representative of the department.

The MINISTRY OF PENSIONS Library is divided into two sections, one at Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, the other at Blackpool. The stock in London amounts to some 3,000 items. This is primarily a working collection of material likely to be of use in the business of administering *war* pensions. A duplicated accession list covering both sections is issued monthly. Though this library is not normally open to the public, inquirers seeking specific information are admitted.

The Library of the MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, at Berkeley Square House, has about 5,000 volumes on its reference shelves; but this number represents only a proportion of the total stock, as much material is held in the various technical branches. An important feature of this library is the collection of local acts and orders relating to transport undertakings. This is available for reference by members of the public. A duplicated monthly bulletin is issued which, as well as lists of recent accessions, contains notes and articles on departmental matters.

The ASSISTANCE BOARD Library, at Vicarage House, Soho Square, contains a representative collection of material on social welfare and related subjects. The library's quarterly bulletin not only lists new acquisitions, but also includes full reviews of outstanding books of interest to the Board's staff. This library, though not open to the general public, grants full facilities to the staffs of voluntary social welfare bodies.

The DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (which is not an administrative department, and therefore strictly speaking falls outside the province of this chapter), maintains

technical libraries at its various research establishments. A collection of the department's publications and a central catalogue covering all establishments save the Geological Survey and the National Physical Laboratory are kept in the Records Bureau at Park House, Rutland Gate.

The remaining eight libraries belong to departments which have been established since 1939 (Civil Aviation, Food, Information, National Insurance, Supply, Town and Country Planning) or to offices which have acquired full departmental status since that date (Fuel and Power, and Works and Buildings):

The Library of the MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION, at Inveresk House, Strand, is of very recent origin. The stock, which at present consists of about 7,000 items, is being rapidly increased. A duplicate accession list and a technical press summary are issued monthly. This library is open to the public.

The MINISTRY OF FOOD Library, at Montagu House, Whitehall, contains 10,000 books and pamphlets and an extensive collection of periodical literature, dealing with food production and distribution and related subjects. A duplicated bi-monthly accession list is issued. Though this library is primarily for official use, non-official inquirers may be admitted.

The Reference Library of the CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION, at Montagu Mansions, Baker Street, contains some 10,000 books and pamphlets dealing with British life and institutions. A duplicated monthly accession list is issued. Though not normally open to the public, this library is prepared to admit outside inquirers seeking information within its field. (There is also a library attached to the Social Survey Division.)

The Library of the MINISTRY OF NATIONAL INSURANCE, at 6 Carlton House Terrace, like that of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, is of very recent origin. Its stock, which now amounts to about 3,000 items, covers all subjects related to the department's work. A duplicated accession list is issued. This library is prepared to admit non-official inquirers.

The MINISTRY OF SUPPLY Central Library (formerly the Ministry of Aircraft Production Library), at Thames House South, Millbank, has a stock of 12,000 items covering various branches of technology. A duplicated bi-monthly accession list is issued. This library is not open to the public. The only non-official

inquirers admitted are accredited members of professional institutions and students of technical colleges who have been recommended by their principals. There are technical libraries at many of the Ministry of Supply research establishments.

The Library of the MINISTRY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, in St. James's Square, has a stock of about 16,000 items devoted to all aspects of planning. A duplicated classified accession list with a periodical article supplement is issued monthly. Some eighty subject bibliographies have been prepared. Use of the library is restricted to members of the ministry's staff and local authority planning officers.

The MINISTRY OF FUEL AND POWER Library, at King's Buildings, Dean Stanley Street, contains about 27,000 books, reports and pamphlets. The former Department of Mines Library formed the nucleus of this stock. Duplicated monthly accession lists and printed lists of departmental statutory instruments are issued. Though primarily for official use, this library is prepared to admit *bona fide* inquirers.

The Library of the MINISTRY OF WORKS AND BUILDINGS, at Lambeth Bridge House, Albert Embankment, contains some 30,000 books and pamphlets (about 10,000 of these formed the library of the Office of Works, the Ministry's predecessor). The major portion of the stock is devoted to works on building. A classified bulletin is issued fortnightly, listing recent accessions and periodical articles of interest. The accession lists are consolidated at half-yearly intervals. Though primarily for official use, this library is prepared to admit non-official inquirers.

## CHAPTER X

# THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON LIBRARY AND SOME OTHER LIBRARIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

By J. H. P. PAFFORD, M.A., F.L.A.

*Goldsmiths' Librarian, University of London*

Any talk on the libraries of London and particularly on those of the University, must, it seems to me, be opened with a recognition of the work of a former Goldsmiths' librarian, the late Mr. R. A. Rye : for Mr. Rye's *Students' guide to the libraries of London*, 3rd edition, 1927, is a truly remarkable book which it is difficult to praise too highly. It is, as it must always remain, a classic on the subject, for although some of its information, particularly that given in statistics, is naturally out of date already, yet much of the book will never be out of date. It will remain a mine of information and will always hold a high place in our literature of librarianship and be indispensable to anyone making a study of the subject of this course.

### THE UNIVERSITY

This will naturally be followed by an appreciation of the fact that any account of libraries of the University must be prefaced by a few words on the University itself—and here may be mentioned the source book, or rather group of source books, the University Calendar and the Calendars of the Colleges. There were no issues of the University Calendar during the war, after that for the year 1939-40, but it has now resumed publication with an issue for the year 1947-8 and many of the Colleges have also begun to re-issue Calendars since the end of the war.

Now although London had no formal university before the early nineteenth century, it can claim to have been a seat of learning from early times. Most, if not all, of the essentials for the making of a university existed and it is a curious thing that a formal university did not come into being in the medieval period or at latest by the end of the seventeenth century. There have, indeed, been several early

references to a University of London ; perhaps the earliest was the proposal (which came to nothing) placed before Queen Elizabeth in 1570 by Sir Humphrey Gilbert for an Academy or University of London, but probably the best known is that contained in the appendix to Stow's *Annals* of 1615 consisting of an account in three parts of the "three famous Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London". The section on the University of London was written by Sir George Buck, Master of the Revels, and his University of London is made up of the Gresham Foundation, the Divinity Schools at Westminster and St. Paul's, the Inns of Court and Chancery, the College of Heralds, the School of Civil Law at Doctors' Commons and St. Paul's School. These, he felt to be in essence a University which only lacked "a common government and the protection of an honourable Chancellor". The Inns of Court and Chancery have also been referred to as universities by Fortescue and Stow, and the Gresham Foundation was specifically founded on university lines—to have professors lecturing in divinity, astronomy, geometry, music, law, medicine and rhetoric. The foundation was made in the will of Sir Thomas Gresham who died in 1579 and lectures are still delivered in Gresham College in the City of London.

It would be easy to add to the evidence that London was a centre of learning—as in such institutions as Sion College, Dr. Williams' Library, the British Museum, and many other libraries, in such famous learned Societies as the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries, and in the very old medical schools at St. Bartholomew's and Guy's Hospitals ; and it would also be easy to find other proposals for the establishment of a university—as in the rare pamphlet of 1647, "Motives grounded upon the word of God . . . for the present founding an University in the Metropolis London" which was reprinted in 1930 by Sir Hermann Gollancz in his "A contribution to the history of University College London".

It is obvious that a very interesting study could be made of the pre-nineteenth century "university of London", of all those elements of a university which somehow inexplicably never crystallized into a university in fact, but which do present a great and varied field of academic interest and achievement ; but no more time can be spent on it now. The University, as we know it, dates from the early nineteenth century, when, mainly through the efforts of Thomas Campbell, the poet, and Lord Brougham, University College was founded. That College was opened in 1828 and until 1836 was

known as the University of London although it was not a university, having no charter and no right to confer degrees. It made no boast of following the proposals of the 1647 pamphlet of being "grounded upon the word of God", and this was the major reason for the opening in 1831 of King's College, where theology was later to become a leading subject, as it is not at University College: indeed, I believe that that College has been referred to in early days as "that Godless institution in Gower Street" and as "Gower Street's cursed Academy". But we cannot stop to enjoy such felicities of public opinion; we can only note that these two noble colleges are the foundation colleges of our University.

In 1836 the University itself was formed, then merely an examining body with power to grant degrees, and as time went on other colleges were attracted into the University which now comprises some sixty-five colleges, schools and institutions, together forming easily the largest university in the country. Student population is at present abnormal everywhere and exact figures are difficult to obtain, but before the war it was roughly true to say that by numbers the bulk of British universities could be divided into four almost equal parts (a) London, (b) Oxford and Cambridge, (c) the remaining English, and (d) the Scottish and Welsh, and of these "quarters" London was the largest: the figures from the Returns of the University Grants Committee for 1938-9 are: London, 13,191; Oxford and Cambridge, 10,954; the other English, 13,044; Scotland and Wales, 12,813 (Scotland, 10,034; Wales, 2,779). When it is remembered that these figures include full-time internal students only, the enormous preponderance of London not only over any other university but over any one of these groups, will be rather more fully appreciated, for London, particularly strong in part-time students, has almost a monopoly in external students (there are a few at Durham University), of whom, in 1938-9, London had no less than 10,839. It may also be remembered that many students included among "the other English"—most of those for example, at such university colleges as Exeter, Southampton, Nottingham and Leicester—were taking London degrees; they were, in fact, external students of the University of London, although they are counted among the 13,044 students noted above as being in the other English universities.

A statement of this superiority in numbers usually creates some surprise even in members of our own University, but the fact of the immense size and range of the University is also clearly brought out



from a brief consideration of some of its colleges and schools—University College with 2,629 full-time students in 1938-9, alone bigger than any other English University except Oxford or Cambridge, King's College with 2,073, the Imperial College of Science and Technology and the London School of Economics, each with over 1,000, Queen Mary College, the famous colleges for women (Bedford, Westfield and the Royal Holloway), the great medical schools at Guy's, St. Bartholomew's, St. Mary's, St. Thomas's, etc., the specialist schools and institutions, as of Oriental Studies, Slavonic Studies, Historical Research, Education, Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Archaeology, etc. These and many others make up that unique and mighty organization known as the University of London, which, like any other university, can never be static, but which is continually developing, assuming new responsibilities, embracing new studies and incorporating new colleges and institutions. Noteworthy in this development is the progress in what are sometimes called "central activities". The degree-conferring and examining body of the early nineteenth century is now also a co-ordinating authority responsible for general policy and financial and academic matters throughout the University. This development as a whole has been truly remarkable and it is no prophecy but merely common knowledge to say that it is likely to be greatly accelerated and expanded in the immediate future.

Every university has its own characteristics and London certainly no less than any other. These are often easier to appreciate than they are to define but it is perhaps right to say that London has always been marked by a certain liberal outlook, a wish to promote the study of all branches of knowledge and a desire that what it has to offer shall be offered as fully, as widely and as freely as possible. And so we see in London a pioneer, for example, in the non-requirement of religious tests for entering a university, a pioneer in the admission of women for degrees, a pioneer in granting external degrees to students not only in the British Isles but throughout the world, and one of the first in the field of extension and tutorial classes. London was also the first to recognize English as a suitable subject of study for a university degree and the first to found a faculty of Science. And this characteristic is shown too in the service of the University Library which is not, and never has been, by any means restricted to use by those within the walls of the colleges or even to present or past members of the University.

## LIBRARIES OF THE COLLEGES

Now all these colleges, etc. (including many not mentioned above) have libraries, and there is also the central library, that of the University of London. One of these libraries—that of the London School of Economics—is being described in another lecture; it is my function only to speak of the University Library and of one or two other libraries of the University. It will be convenient to deal first with some of the college libraries and, as they are so numerous and some of them so great, it is possible to do little more than to remind you of their existence, but that reminder must be made as emphatically as possible. It must be remembered, for example, that the libraries of University College and King's College are older than the University itself and that the library of the former was, until its great losses during the war, the largest in the University. These two great libraries are rich in a wide range of subjects and contain special collections of the first importance. In University College may be mentioned the library and MSS. of Jeremy Bentham, the Ricardo collection on political economy, the Graves library of early mathematics, the Barlow Dante library, the Whitley Stokes Celtic library, the Sir John Rotton library of literature and history, the Scandinavian collection and many others. In King's College there are the Marsden philological library, the Wheatstone library of early books on electricity and kindred subjects, the Skeat and Furnivall English library, the Ronald Burrows collection on Byzantine history and medieval and modern Greek, and many other special collections.

For the rest it must be sufficient to remember the selection of colleges, etc., mentioned above and to suggest that reference should be made to the University Calendar under "University Departments, Incorporated Colleges, Schools and Institutions". It will be seen not only that there are many libraries but many special libraries and that hardly any important subject is unrepresented. It will also be common knowledge that many of these libraries are among the finest in the country on their subject. But however tempting it is to say more about some of these magnificent special libraries, we must now turn to the University Library itself.

## THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

*History and Collections.* The University Library can be said to date from about 1838 when a gift of books was made to the University, although it did not come into use until 1877 when it was first

opened to readers. A catalogue of its contents was published in 1876 and a revised abbreviation of this, brought down to 1897, was issued in 1900, but although the library was well established in 1900, its importance today is largely due to development during the present century and in particular to the devoted service of the late R. A. Rye who joined the library staff in 1905 and was Goldsmiths' librarian from 1906 to 1944. In 1900 it was transferred from Burlington Gardens to South Kensington and, after re-organization and re-arrangement, was formally re-opened in 1906. In 1937-8 it was moved again, this time to its present site in the Senate House and Library in Bloomsbury. Before it had had a year to settle down, many of the books were once again moved; about 60,000 valuable books being sent to Oxford and 12,000 to Cambridge, while thousands more were taken from their shelves and stacked for safety in the basement of the building. Losses during the war were comparatively light: four bombs struck the building and valuable stack space is still out of action and there is much general blast damage; but only 200 books were lost, including, unfortunately, about 60 early printed books of some value. These losses are, however, trivial compared to those at some of the colleges: University College had the major part of its buildings and some 80,000 volumes destroyed, King's College lost about 7,500 volumes, Birkbeck College lost its buildings and 36,000 volumes (nine-tenths of its stock) and Bedford College had damaged buildings and lost 3,000 books.

In 1902 a report to the Senate stated that the University Library had between 30,000 and 35,000 books, of which about 10,000 were unprovided with shelves and had to be stacked on the floor. On its removal to Bloomsbury in 1938 there were about 330,000 volumes and today there are about 500,000 with an annual intake of over 15,000 volumes. This library has been built up both by the steady selection and purchase of books and by the receipt of gifts—some of which have been of great importance. The library is, as any general library must be, stronger in the humanities than in the sciences and medicine, but it includes books on all subjects studied in the University and indeed on all subjects likely to be matters for university study. It can claim to be one of the best stocked and equipped of the modern general university libraries in this country and it contains some special collections of outstanding importance. The Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature (about 60,000 volumes) is a collection of the first importance on early economic and other

non-political history of Great Britain. The Durning-Lawrence Library contains a collection of works by and on Sir Francis Bacon which is unlikely to be surpassed by many other libraries in the world, and a good working Shakespeare collection, which includes, among other treasures, a set of the folios. There are, in addition, the Augustus de Morgan Library of early books on mathematics and astronomy, the Grote Library of classical literature, the Quick Memorial Library of books on education, the Preedy Memorial Library on art and archaeology, the Harry Price Library of magical literature, and several others. All these collections are, of course, steadily developed and the library's resources in some of these subjects, e.g. education, art and archaeology, are strong. Apart from these, the library is particularly rich in history, bibliography, palaeography and general reference books, in languages and literature, especially English, German and Italian, and in arts subjects generally.

A note on the collections must not omit a reference to one of outstanding importance even though it has not yet been received at the library. In 1945 an offer from Sir Louis Sterling was gratefully accepted by the Court to bequeath his library to the University on condition that it should be permanently housed in the University Library as a special collection to be known as "The Louis Sterling Library", and that it should form the nucleus of a collection of special books. The donor intends also to bequeath £5,000 to the University for equipment, maintenance, and general purposes connected with this library.

This very valuable collection consists of about 10,000 books and manuscripts and was described in an article in the *Times literary supplement* of 4th February, 1939. The manuscripts include a fourteenth century *Piers Plowman* (c. 1395), a Byron holograph of five cantos of *Don Juan*, and MSS. of Tennyson, Scott, Swinburne, Borrow and of the works of some modern writers. Among the rare printed books is a copy of Caxton's *Game and playe of the Chesse* (1481) and the *Chronicles of England* (1480); a fine Coverdale Bible (1535) and a perfect copy of the 1611 Authorized Version; the Shakespeare folios with duplicates of the second, third and fourth, and the *King Lear* (1618) and *Othello* (1630) quartos; the very fine and scarce editions of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century authors comprise many first editions, some in original bindings, a copy of George Herbert's *The Temple* (1634) which is believed to be in a Little Gidding binding, and a copy of the rare Kilmarnock

Burns; the private presses are well represented in the collection which contains complete sets of Kelmscott and Doves Press productions and books from the Ashendene and Golden Cockerel Presses.

So much for a short introductory survey of the history and contents of the library. We may now give a brief note on its government and policy and on some of its services.

*Government, Finance and Staff.* As is generally known, the main control of a university is usually vested in two bodies, one of which controls general policy, finance and property and the other academic matters. In London these two bodies are known as the Court and the Senate respectively. The control of the library is vested in the Senate which delegates extensive powers for this purpose to one of its sub-committees—the Library Committee. This consists of members of the Senate, of professors of the University, heads and librarians of some colleges and representatives of other bodies, such as the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and the British Museum. There are about twenty members and the librarian acts as secretary. The Committee meets once each term but may appoint sub-committees for special purposes. The book fund has to cover purchase of books, subscriptions to periodicals and the cost of binding: it has recently been increased and further increases are expected. Salaries and overhead expenses are borne out of general university funds. There are at present forty members of the staff and staff increases are expected in the near future.

*Policy and Service.* In discussing the policy of the library it is first necessary to appreciate the nature of its readers and of its field of service.

With regard to the readers these may be divided into two groups, on the one hand the undergraduates and on the other the post-graduates and staff. These are all "professional" readers; study is their full-time occupation, and their demands on a library are therefore persistent and intense. Their needs in book provision may very roughly be summarized by saying that in addition to a small working library on his subject and a general "cultural" library, the undergraduate needs many copies of the books essential for his studies (except his textbooks which he should possess himself). The post-graduate and research worker, on the other hand, does not need so much duplication of "common" books but a wide representation in his field of study—single copies of books good, bad and indifferent. The undergraduate's needs can, in normal times, be reasonably well

supplied. But the research worker's needs obviously can never be met in advance and never fully supplied at any time. His requirements are unpredictable and sometimes even unobtainable. These two needs throw some light on the problems of book-selection, and it will be appreciated that for the selection of research material, the University staff and other research workers are of great assistance to any university library.

With regard to the field of service it need only be said that this is very wide and may be divided into four groups:

- (a) Present internal members of the University and all its colleges, schools, etc.
- (b) Present external members of the University.
- (c) Former staff and students, whether external or internal.
- (d) Other readers who are not, and never have been, members of the University but who have been recommended by a senior member of the University.

This field is obviously very extensive both in numbers of readers, in subjects studied, in the varied levels of study, and in geographical distribution of readers. In order to meet its needs two things are at once obvious—the University Library must be a large general library, and it must also give both a reference and a lending service. The need for the reference service is clear. Whatever the nature of other libraries in the University, there must be a central library which can meet the needs of all these readers and particularly of the internal staff and students who are not only greatly increasing in numbers but are tending to concentrate in the Bloomsbury area: and for these it must be open for as many hours as possible each day. The University cannot look to the British Museum for special assistance in giving this reference service. The Museum is a national institution admitting no reader under 21 years of age and no one for undergraduate study. It is intended for the scholar specialist and the University must see that none of its members except the scholar specialist need apply to use the already crowded reading rooms of the Museum. On the other hand the need for the lending service is equally clear. This very scholar specialist who can use the Museum may rely on the University for that lending service which the Museum cannot give. The internal student certainly needs it, and for many external and many former students the lending service is all-important.



In order to give an efficient reference service, the University Library is well equipped with reading rooms. It can seat nearly 300 readers at one time, and careful attention has been given to comfort, lighting and quiet. In addition to the normal reading rooms there are twenty-four carrels, each of which is virtually a private study, and there are two sound proof rooms in which typewriters may be used. The reading rooms are open during term from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Saturdays 6 p.m.). In vacation they are closed at 6 p.m. each evening. They are never opened on Sundays. A central library of this kind should provide facilities which are not possible, or essential in every college library, and so the University Library also has, for example, a room specially designed for the study of maps and palaeography—two subjects which both need large and specially made cases for storing material, large tables and the best possible lighting both natural and artificial. It also has a music library of scores, books on music, gramophone records and pianola rolls and this is in a special part of the building containing audition rooms with a piano/pianola and gramophones.

With regard to the lending service the special need is obviously not only for an over the counter service to readers in person, but an extensive system of postal lending. As many readers are living in parts of the British Isles remote from London, this service is of the greatest importance but it is also one which needs a large staff, since the correspondence entailed (over subject and inaccurate inquiries) is very great; in addition, the keeping of accounts and collecting postages, together with the packing and posting of books all probably mean that the work involved in issuing one book on postal loan is as much as is needed to issue six over the counter. During 1947 the library lent 69,968 books of which 54,340 were issued to readers in person and 15,628 by post.

The library gives and projects other services which are of use both to readers in London and to those in the provinces. It provides an author catalogue on cards, indexing London University theses also under the degree for which they were awarded—the library receives a typescript copy of all theses accepted by the University. But it has also published several catalogues and bibliographies, e.g.:

1. Accessions lists. Lists of selected accessions to the library have been published regularly since 1906. The latest issue is the *Classified catalogue of selected accessions, 1945-46*.

2. List of manuscripts, maps and plans, and printed books and pamphlets, mostly on railways and navigation, from the collections of John Urpeth Rastrick and his son, Henry Rastrick, presented by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths to the Goldsmiths' Library. [1908.]
3. Catalogue of the manuscripts and autograph letters in the University Library, etc. Compiled by R. A. Rye. 1921. (*And Supplement 1921-30. 1930.*)
4. Catalogue of works dealing with the study of western palaeography in the libraries of the University of London, at its central buildings and at University College and at King's College. Compiled by J. Wilks and A. D. Lacey. 1921.
5. Hand-list of serials. 1926.
6. Catalogue of the collections of English, Scottish and Irish proclamations in the University Library (Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature), etc. 1928.
7. Catalogue of the collection of broadsides in the University Library (Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature), etc. 1930.
8. Catalogue of books on archaeology and art and cognate works belonging to the Preedy Memorial Library and other collections in the University Library. 3 parts. 1935-7. (Sect. I Archaeology and ancient art; Sect. II Art; Index.) (*And Supplement 1937. 1937.*)
9. Handlist of the current periodicals. 1940.
10. Historical and armorial bookbindings exhibited in the University Library: descriptive catalogue. By R. A. Rye and M. S. Quinn. 1937.
11. A reader's guide to the University Library. Third issue [with illustrations and containing the Rules and Regulations.] 1939.

Of these the *Subject index of books on Archaeology and Art* is perhaps the most important, but the *annual Classified catalogue of selected accessions* is also of great use to readers. It is hoped that this published bibliographical work can be developed when times become more normal.

It is also intended that the library shall endeavour to link up other library resources of the University particularly by the compilation of union catalogues of periodicals and books. It already

possesses a microfilm camera and three microfilm readers and it hopes to add a photostat camera. It has also a small bindery which has just now been brought into service.

A note on policy and service cannot conclude without reference to the relationship between the many libraries of the University and particularly between the University and the College Libraries. There is as yet no formal co-operation between them, but there is an understanding which might be expressed by saying that while a college library exists primarily for members of the college, the University exists for all, indeed, for everyone connected with the University. The University Library can never take the place of a college library but it can act as a support to it by intensifying services which a college library already gives and by supplying special services and books which it might not be possible for the college to supply. There will always be much duplication in and between the many libraries of the University—with some books there can hardly be too much of it—but the existence of the University Library makes it possible for college libraries to discard books which are unnecessary if they are available elsewhere; and this is something which will be possible with much more certainty when union catalogues have been compiled. It is also desirable that a survey of special collections in the University should be made. Even now there is, naturally, much common knowledge about these. Everyone knows, for example, that the chief collections in the University on Slavonic subjects, on Oriental subjects and on modern economics are, respectively, at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, the School of Oriental and African Studies and the London School of Economics, and no other library in the University is likely to collect the minutiae of those subjects, although some other colleges where any of these subjects may be taught, and certainly the University Library, will have working collections of them. A good deal of information about special collections in the University has already been published in wider surveys as those made by R. A. Rye, Dr. L. Newcombe, ASLIB, and more recently by Dr. W. O. Hassall (*A select bibliography of Italy*, 1946) and Mr. W. R. Le Fanu (*A list of medical libraries, etc.* 1946) and partial union catalogues of periodicals exist in the *World list of scientific periodicals*, the *Union catalogue of the periodical publications in the University Libraries of the British Isles* and the location list in the 1938 volume of the *Subject index to periodicals*; and of books in such special bibliographies as the *London bibliography of*

*the social sciences* (the School of Economics, the University Library and some other libraries in London) 1931-7 and the *Catalogue of works dealing with the study of western palaeography* by J. Wilks and A. D. Lacey, 1921, which is a union catalogue of relevant material in the libraries of the University and of University and King's Colleges.

It is needless to add that the existence of the many large and valuable libraries in London outside the University is a matter of great importance to the University. Their existence by no means relieves the University of the duty of making its own library provision but they are an aid to study, especially to post-graduate study, of great importance, and in some cases may make it unnecessary for the University to build up large special collections in certain subjects.

*Travelling Libraries.* The preceding account has been restricted to what may be called the general library; but the University Library also includes a library, separately financed, for Tutorial Classes and Extension Lectures Courses known as the "Travelling Libraries". This has some 35,000 books and sends out and maintains nearly 300 libraries to adult classes each year. In 1947, 291 classes were supplied with libraries containing 18,819 books and 1,934 books were also supplied to special classes at summer schools. This is believed to be a pioneer, as it is certainly the largest university library service of its kind in this country.

*The Building.* These notes have dealt with the contents and service of the library and have said little about the building. This is a part of the headquarters of the University which comprises not only the Senate House, administrative offices and library, but also some colleges and schools of the University. Barely a third of the whole block as planned was finished before the outbreak of war in 1939, but the part completed includes the bulk of the library, of which only one wing—to contain a periodicals room and special collections room—is yet to be built, although the top three stories of the tower are unfinished and not yet available for use. In a building which is not independent but is a part of one serving purposes other than a library, each part must make some concessions to the needs of the others. The principle of the library is that most of the reading rooms are on the fourth floor (the Travelling Libraries and the temporary Periodicals Room are on the second and third floors respectively). These reading rooms are built out round a central catalogue and book

service hall which is on the fourth floor immediately under the tower. The fifth floor is mainly bookstack and the sixth wholly devoted to that purpose and this floor runs the complete length of the building from north to south. The tower stories are also bookstacks. The present accommodation (when war damage is made good) is for about 600,000 books. With the tower completed and new wing added, it will house about a million volumes. Library towers were popular as bookstacks in the period between the wars: they are at the moment, perhaps temporarily, somewhat out of favour. There are naturally arguments for and against them: but in any big town and particularly in London, where ground space is very costly, there is an immediate argument in favour of such overhead storage. London also provides arguments in favour of reading rooms on a floor above ground level. In a smaller town where a library can be built away from the sound, and sight of traffic and away from other buildings, there would be a clear advantage in having reading rooms on the ground floor and not to have to approach them by lifts or stairs, but in London it is worth climbing a little to have the advantages of quiet, airiness and unimpaired natural light which might not be possible on a ground floor.

*Concluding Note.* The University Library stock naturally suffers by comparison with those of its counterparts at Oxford and Cambridge: they have had a start of some three centuries and they enjoy the doubtful privilege of copyright deposit. There is much yet to do: but this brief account of the University Library—and still more inadequate references to some of the college libraries—will show that in a comparatively short time much has been done; and this paper may fittingly end, as it began, with a recognition of the remarkable achievement of the late R. A. Rye, Goldsmiths' Librarian from 1906 to 1944.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE BRITISH LIBRARY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE

By G. WOLEDGE, B.A., A.L.A., *Librarian*

### I

The British Library of Political and Economic Science (known till 1925 as the British Library of Political Science) is peculiar among British libraries in that it was designed for two functions, which it continues to carry out to their mutual advantage; it is at the same time the working collection of the London School of Economics (the country's chief centre of social studies) and a national collection of materials for research. Its scope, like that of the School, is not restricted to economics and politics, but embraces the social sciences in the widest sense; and it is believed to be the largest library in the world exclusively devoted to them.

It was established by public subscription in 1896 on the initiative of Sidney Webb (afterwards Lord Passfield), the leader of the group who had founded the School in the previous year; the reflection of his own methods of research can be seen in the appeal for funds, with its emphasis on the need for collections of official publications, pamphlets, and privately printed reports and documents such as were available neither in the British Museum nor in any special library in the country, as a basis for the comparative study of such subjects as local government, poor relief, railway rates, and co-operation. The School would no doubt in any case have collected a library, but in fact the scope of the library and the scale on which it was planned bear indelibly the marks of Webb's mind. His active support of the library continued for more than half a century, and since Sir Thomas Bodley refounded the Oxford University Library, no British library has owed so much to the mind and work of one man.

After six years in adapted quarters in Adelphi Terrace, the library moved with the School to a new building on part of the present site in Clare Market and Houghton Street. It had already a large collection of materials, though scarcely yet, nor for many years to come, well enough chosen or sufficiently organized to be



called a valuable collection. Much of the material needed—privately printed reports and the like—could only be obtained by gift from the bodies producing it, and they responded well to requests for help. Private collectors, too, were generous; Webb gave his unique collections on English trade unionism, and Sir William Acworth made the first of his gifts of books on transport. But little money was available for the many types of book which had to be bought, and for some years the library was woefully short of many essentials.

Shelf-room was also insufficient, and books were kept in locked cases outside the library, stacked in piles on the floor and even tied up in bundles. Staff was short, unskilled, and constantly shifting; there was no subject catalogue, and the author catalogue was restricted to certain categories of material, excluding those in which the library was richest, which were incidentally the most difficult to trace.

The first librarian (till 1909) was John McKillop; but the greater part of his time was taken up by his collateral duties as secretary of the School, and for a great part of her service from 1903 to 1918 Miss Mary F. C. Stuart was *de facto* librarian with the title of "Hon. Curator of Documents".

In 1910, the first full-time librarian was appointed, B. M. Headicar, formerly district librarian in the Southwark public libraries. In the twenty-three years of his energetic librarianship much progress was made. The stock continued to increase; collections of manuscripts and rare books were given or bought, and the Fry Library of International Law and the Schuster Library of Comparative Legislation were deposited. A subject catalogue, which Headicar had from the first insisted on as an essential, was prepared and published with financial help from the Carnegie Trust and the Rockefeller Foundation. New premises were built (1925, 1933) with benefactions from Mr. and Mrs. Cobden Unwin and from the Rockefeller Foundation and other extensions were adapted from other parts of the School premises; they were equipped with a lavish variety of ingenious experimental equipment; the library was one of the first in the country to instal a book-conveyor (since discarded) and a photostat.

The librarian from 1933 to 1944 was W. C. Dickinson, formerly assistant secretary of the School and since Professor of Ancient (Scottish) History at Edinburgh. Under his librarianship, the library strengthened its stock and greatly improved its organization.

Amongst special collections received may be mentioned those on the book trade and the Spanish Civil War, and the Cannan and Bonar collections ; further details of all these are given below ; the Schuster Library was presented outright, and brought up to date by extensive purchases. Perhaps more important was the systematization of the library's day-to-day purchases of current and older literature under an acquisitions officer and with the help of an acquisitions committee. The cataloguing department was organized under a senior cataloguer, new routine methods were devised, and the very imperfect author catalogue was revised throughout and nearly completed. The problem of space again became acute ; it was solved for the time partly by the adaptation of more of the School premises, partly by internal re-arrangements ; and plans were made for an extension, though the war of 1939-45 made it impossible to carry them out.

From 1939 to 1945 all of the School except the library was evacuated to Cambridge. After some months when the library was used by the Ministry of Economic Warfare (which then occupied the whole of the building), it was virtually closed through these years, and a much reduced staff was mainly concerned with making such acquisitions as were possible under difficult conditions, and overtaking arrears of cataloguing ; some 150,000 volumes were evacuated for safety to different parts of the country, but in the event the library was only very slightly damaged by bombardment.

In 1940, Mrs. Bernard Shaw gave the School a sum of money to establish a library of books not related to its regular studies ; the Shaw Library is kept up from the regular funds of the School, and now forms a good general library in which art, music and literature are perhaps the most prominent subjects. It is kept in an informally furnished room apart from the main library, used also for concerts and exhibitions.

## II

The scope of the library—wider than is often realized—is the social sciences in the fullest sense of that term. For parts of its field it does not aim at being more than a working library, though a good one, for a teaching institution ; this is notably the case with geography, anthropology, general history, philosophy, and psychology, though particular aspects of all these subjects are collected more fully. There are other topics falling within its field where the existence of more narrowly specialized libraries makes exhaustive collecting unnecessary ; and it is hoped that fuller knowledge of the country's

book resources will make it possible to extend yet further this kind of co-operative book-collection. With these exceptions, the aim of the library is to collect all the materials likely to be needed for research within its field. It need hardly be said that this aim is achieved with varying success in different subjects, and never completely.

In general, it should be said, the library does not collect books in non-European languages. An inquiry made before the war\* showed that in collecting foreign material it had been very successful as compared with other great libraries, much less so by any reasonable absolute standards. Books in the less familiar languages and from the more remote or inaccessible countries are naturally least strongly represented, but something is being done to redress the balance. At present particular attention is being given to Russia, but there are other countries—though no doubt less important ones—whose output is not adequately represented.

The library collects books of all dates. It is already rich in early works, but it is naturally far from complete in them, more particularly in minor works which, unimportant individually, may collectively form essential source material for research; it must be admitted that this is true in many directions even for books published for some years after the foundation of the library. Here again, gaps are continually being filled, but very much preliminary bibliographical work still needs to be done.

A more detailed account of some of the richer parts of the collections follows.

The library is naturally strong in government publications. For the United Kingdom, it is almost complete, even for the earlier years, though it does not now acquire current scientific and technical publications which do not bear on the social sciences. It has been a depository library for U.S.A. "documents" since 1903, and has an almost complete set of them from 1873, as well as a large selection of more recent "processed" documents not included in the deposit; it has also a representative selection of the documents of individual states. For other countries, though very few are entirely unrepresented on the library's shelves, the collections vary much in completeness, and very much work remains to be done in assessing and acquiring them. At the moment, much time is being spent in

\* Waples (D.) and Lasswell (H. D.). *National libraries and foreign scholarship: notes on recent selections in social science*. University of Chicago P., 1936.

tracing and acquiring the publications of occupying powers in Germany and other countries since 1945.

With these may be grouped the publications of inter-governmental organizations—the League of Nations and the United Nations and their specialized organs, as well as minor *ad hoc* bodies. Here again, recent developments have been numerous and difficult to keep up with.

Publication of local government authorities are collected less exhaustively, but the library has representative documents of about a hundred and fifty of these in Great Britain, and a small selection from many other countries.

The collection of statistics is naturally full. Many of them are government publications, but the library has also the chief collections published in other forms. A reading room devoted to them contains on open access the chief current statistics for all parts of the world, and a selection of those for earlier years, particularly for Britain and the U.S.A. A special sheaf catalogue of statistical material not easily found is in preparation.

In economics, the library is perhaps richest in theoretical books; it acquires currently all important treatises from all parts of the world, and most of the academic periodicals; there are still gaps in its collection of the earlier literature, but they are filled as opportunity arises. The literature of descriptive economics, more extensive and of very unequal value, is acquired more selectively, but the library attempts to acquire all academic works of any importance, and a good selection of those produced for practical purposes, including periodicals, annuals, and reports relating to different aspects of trade, industry, and commerce. There is a particularly full collection of bank reports from all parts of the world, most of them not published. The Acworth Collection on Transport, the nucleus of which was given by Sir William Acworth and which is kept up to date by the library, contains much historical material and an extensive collection of reports of transport undertakings, and it goes farther into the technical side than most of the library's collections; there is also a collection of manuscript and printed materials on land and water transport in Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Another special collection is that on the book trade, the nucleus of which, given by Mr. A. D. Power, has been much increased by other benefactors, notably Sir Stanley Unwin, Mr. Geoffrey Williams and Mr. J. G. Wilson, and by purchase. In trade unionism,

the Webb collection, as has already been mentioned, was one of the earliest benefactions to the library; the reports and periodicals it contains are kept up to date. Business archives are not collected extensively, partly because it is felt that they are more valuable in the locality to which they relate; but the library has a good deal of miscellaneous material of this kind from the eighteenth century onwards. Of printed histories of individual firms, the library acquires all it can; but many of them are printed for private distribution, and some no doubt escape notice. The library has large selections from the private libraries of Edwin Cannan (including his manuscripts and correspondence) and James Bonar, and a large part of the private papers of John Stuart Mill.

For politics and public administration, one kind of primary sources material is the government publications which have already been mentioned. The library contains many special collections of the material of political controversy, amongst which may be mentioned one of tracts from the time of the English Civil War, one of ephemeral material from the Spanish Civil War, and the Hutchinson collection on Socialism, which contains comprehensively writings for and against it. The Webb collection on Local Government consists of the extracts from local English records and other materials used by the Webbs for their historical works, and now arranged topographically. The library has a large part of the manuscripts of John Francis Bray, the early Socialist. It acquires all current books of importance on political theory, but its collection of the earlier writers, though large, is still very defective.

In law, the library is particularly strong in two directions. The Schuster Library of Comparative Legislation, the nucleus of which was collected by Dr. E. J. Schuster and given to the library by the Society for Comparative Legislation, is kept up to date by regular purchases, and is perhaps the fullest collection in the country of the current and recent law of foreign countries, including the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A. The Fry Library of International Law, formed in memory of Sir Edward Fry, is the property of independent trustees, but is housed in the library and administered by its staff. It covers public international law and private international law (conflict of laws), and is probably the fullest collection of books on these subjects in the country. Other legal topics which the library collects particularly fully are administrative law and penology and criminology.

Amongst other subjects in which the library attempts to be in some measure exhaustive may be mentioned sociology (theoretical and descriptive), demography, some aspects of colonial affairs, economic geography, and social and economic history. Enough has probably been said above to indicate the general lines on which these are collected.

The library has over 9,000 periodicals and other serials, of which about 4,750 are received currently. Its total contents amount to about 300,000 bound volumes, together with materials not yet bound estimated as the equivalent of a further 50,000 volumes. The total number of items is unknown, but must be well over half a million.

### III

The main body of the users of the library consists, of course, of the staff and students of the School ; but that hospitality to unattached scholars which in general characterizes British university libraries is in this case part of the library's *raison d'être*, and it welcomes all research workers who need its resources. Pressure on space makes it necessary to exclude those whose needs can be satisfied elsewhere, including (except during the School vacation) undergraduate and similar students. It may be added that for persons engaged in academic and non-profit-making research, the fees are usually remitted.

The library lends books extensively to other libraries through the National Central Library. It tries to answer bibliographical and to some extent other inquiries addressed to it either by callers or through the post ; many of these come from abroad, and some of them involve a good deal of research, though care is taken to avoid doing work that the inquirer can be expected to do for himself.

The library occupies the lowest three floors of one end of the School's main building. It is entered by way of a room which contains the catalogues, some reference books (mainly bibliographical), the inquiry desk, and the counters where books are issued and received. A great part of the conversation incidental to the transaction of library business is thus kept out of the reading rooms, and the points of contact between readers and the library staff are as far as possible concentrated. It is believed that this was the first such room to be provided in any British library, though they were already common in the United States. Though it is not well suited



to its purpose, it is the most noteworthy feature of premises that (except in detail) are the result of unpremeditated growth rather than of deliberate planning.

There are twelve reading rooms, eight devoted to particular subjects or groups of subjects, one for current periodicals, two for research students, and one for the teaching staff. This sub-division is due to historical accidents, and though some of the rooms are finely proportioned, it would be more convenient if they were fewer and larger.

There are places for some 550 readers, and at busy times every place is occupied. The reading rooms contain an open-shelf collection of some 40,000 volumes—except in the case of one or two subjects, a select collection chosen for the purpose. A smaller open-shelf collection would be sufficient and in some ways better, were it not that it is impossible to allow readers any access to the stacks. It is arranged on a modification of the Library of Congress classification.

There is a series of study-rooms attached to most of the teaching departments of the School, open to specialist undergraduates; they are provided by the library with working collections of books (duplicates) but are administered by the students concerned.

The reserve stacks, which contain the rest of the library's collections, ramble underground beneath the reading rooms, beyond them and round a basement courtyard, and come up to the surface again beyond; a reminder that the library stands near if not on the site of the Magpie and Stump where Mr. Pickwick met Mr. Lowten, which announced that it had 500,000 barrels of double stout in its cellars, leaving the mind in a state of not unpleasing doubt and uncertainty as to the precise direction in the bowels of the earth in which this mighty cavern might be supposed to extend. The reserve stacks, though extensive in several directions, are not extensive enough. There is not room enough to maintain a regular subject order, and the books, other than special collections, are arranged in the following groups: government publications (arranged by country); series (each having an arbitrary running number); pamphlets (bound separately if of particular age or importance, otherwise several in one volume, and arranged by a broad subject classification); and "treatises"—i.e. all other books (arranged by size and running number).

Of the rooms where the library staff are condemned to work, the less said the better.

Of the library's two principal catalogues, one is of particular importance as a published contribution to international bibliography. This is the subject catalogue, published as *A London bibliography of the social sciences*. The first four volumes contain the library's stock in 1929, the fifth and sixth the acquisitions of 1929-31 and 1931-6; a plan to issue further volumes at regular five-year intervals was interrupted by the war, but it is now hoped to issue a series covering the twelve years 1936-48. In the meantime, the continuation up to date is available on cards in the library. It is arranged in dictionary form, with subject-headings based on those of the Library of Congress. Though it has many defects and is not always easy to use—or at any rate to get the fullest use out of—it is the most comprehensive and in many ways the fullest guide to the literature of the social sciences, and is all the more valuable because that literature is in general very inadequately sign-posted.

The other principal catalogue, the Author (General) Catalogue, calls for little special comment. It is on cards, according to the Anglo-American code. It is still incomplete for certain materials of minor importance, and British Parliamentary papers and U.S.A. government publications are excluded, since they have adequate printed catalogues.

Select lists of recent additions, classified under broad subject-headings, are stencilled and issued monthly, and in addition, a complete duplicate set of subject cards for the additions of the last three months is filed separately.

An index of papers on economics in certain select periodicals is stencilled and issued monthly, and is also cumulated on cards. This index was started as an interim measure until the appearance of the published collective indexes to periodicals; it has now been extended to cover some periodicals not included in them, and its future scope and form are still undecided.

The library publishes a leaflet of *Notes for readers* and a *Guide to the collections* which gives a fuller account of its contents and arrangement.

The library does not in principle lend books; but members of the School staff can use books in their own rooms, and they and research students can borrow certain classes of books for home reading. There is a lending library, separately organized but under the same general administration, which provides so far as possible all the books likely to be needed by undergraduates. It normally excludes

books of a kind which they can be expected to buy for themselves, but in the present book shortage this policy has been reversed and books in great demand are provided in multiple copies.

#### IV

The library has a staff of forty-six, thirteen of whom are in senior grades for which a degree is normally required. The work is divided into five departments—administration, acquisitions, processing, circulation and inquiries, and bibliography; and one senior officer is responsible for each of these. In addition, certain senior members of the staff have also a general advisory responsibility for particular subjects or other groups of material, e.g. law, government publications, statistics, colonial affairs, *Slavonica*.

In book-selection, the library benefits much from the teaching staff and its wide contacts with public affairs in many directions, and from the many research workers amongst its readers; these are particularly valuable in bringing to notice current materials outside the book trade or suggesting channels for their acquisition, and in locating collections of earlier materials which have not come into the regular second-hand market. The librarian has, however, a wide responsibility for book-selection, and in fact the library's intake is so large in relation to the field covered that for normal and straightforward acquisitions, whether of current or earlier material, it cannot rely to any extent on proposals from teachers and other readers, though these are encouraged and always welcomed.

Current English and American publications are in the main selected from announcements and ordered on (or before) publication. For foreign books, where the acquisitions are more select, more use is made of reviews, but announcements are also used, particularly at present when books go out of print so quickly; full use is also made of the too meagre opportunities afforded by the book trade for personal inspection of new foreign books.

A good deal of the library's intake of current material consists of reports and the like which are not regularly published; much of this can only be traced through press reports of conferences and the proceedings of official and unofficial bodies, or by private inquiries, and can only be obtained by writing to the body responsible.

Second-hand books are chosen from catalogues in the usual way; but it is hoped to supplement this by the systematic compilation of lists of desiderata as staff time can be found for the work.

The library is able to use for exchange the periodical *Economica*, published by the School, and obtains much material in this way. At times when trade flows smoothly, this method of acquisition is extravagant in administration and very doubtfully economical of cash; but in the present difficulties it has great advantages, and is being used increasingly.

A small and informal acquisitions committee, consisting of five members of the teaching staff with the librarian and the acquisitions officer, meets at frequent intervals to decide on doubtful cases—both those in which the value of a particular book is uncertain, and those which involve a decision on policy; although the general lines of the library's acquisitions policy are, of course, already settled, questions of the latter kind are still surprisingly frequent. Perhaps even more valuable than any decisions on specific points is the discussion of the library's needs between its officers and its users; such discussion does, of course, take place profitably on many occasions, more and less formal, without any such organization; but it is found that the continuity of regular meetings adds greatly to its value.

Of the processes of acquiring books, once it has been decided that they are needed, there is little that calls for particular comment except the visible index system of recording the receipt of current periodicals, which has been fully described by Dr. Plant, the deputy librarian.\*

The draft catalogue entries are written by the cataloguers on work-cards, from which the entries are prepared by cataloguing typists; in addition to the cards for public use and duplicates of subject catalogue entries for printing, two carbon copies are prepared for official use, in a shelf-list and a duplicate of the Author (General) Catalogue, both in sheaf form.†

The officer in charge of circulation and inquiries is also responsible for the general running of the reading rooms, the admission of external readers, the photostat service, inter-library loans, the preparation of *Notes for readers*, and the library's miscellaneous relations with members of the public. The officer in charge of bibliography deals with postal inquiries and with those from readers which involve much bibliographical research, and is also available for bibliographical work with a view to acquisitions.

\* Plant (Marjorie). Periodicals procedure in a university library. In *College and research libraries* 3 (1): 57-63. (Dec., 1941.)

† Plant (Marjorie). The statistical treatment of accessions. In *Library Association Record*. 40: 407-412. (1938.)

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LONDON LIBRARY

By C. J. PURNELL, M.A., *Librarian*

Before 1841 there was no general library in London from which the more serious and learned books could be borrowed. There were subscription libraries for fiction and light literature as well as a few small institutional libraries and Dr. Williams's Library which was largely theological. A "London Library" had been established in 1785 in Ludgate St. with rules similar to those of the present London Library, and a printed catalogue was issued in 1786. In 1801 it was moved to Hatton Garden and a little later it was amalgamated with the Westminster Library in Jermyn St., but nothing seems to be known of the fate of this library.

On 18th May, 1832, Thomas Carlyle wrote in his journal, "What a sad want I am in of libraries, of books to gather facts from! Why is there not a Majesty's Library in every county town? There is a Majesty's gaol and gallows in every one."

In 1839 busy with his preparatory work on Cromwell he began to feel more acutely the need of such a library and enlisted the help of his friends in furthering the project of starting one. Most energetic among these was William Dougal Christie, a Cambridge scholar of 24 and barrister, who acted as Joint Honorary Secretary till the library was established. Christie was later M.P. for Weymouth and envoy to Brazil. He died in 1874.

The story of their efforts is told in *Carlyle and the London Library, an account of its foundation: with unpublished letters of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by Frederic Harrison in 1907. Prominent among their activities was the public meeting, presided over by Lord Eliot, of "Friends to the establishment of a Library from which books may be had by subscribers at their homes" held on 24th June, 1840, at which Carlyle made (apart from addresses and lectures) his one and only speech.

The whole speech is worth reading. Here are a few extracts:

"A book is a kind of thing that requires a man to be self-collected. He must be alone with it. A good book is the purest essence of a

human soul. How could a man take it into a crowd, with bustle of all sorts going on around him? The good of a book is not the facts that can be got out of it, but the kind of resonance that it awakens in our own minds. A book may strike out of us a thousand things, may make us know a thousand things which it does not know itself. For this purpose I decidedly say, that no man can read a book well, with the bustle of three or four hundred people about him. Even forgetting the mere facts which a book contains, a man can do more with it in his own apartment, in the solitude of one night, than in a week in such a place as the British Museum.

"London has more men and intellect waiting to be developed than any place in the world ever had assembled. Yet there is no place on the civilized earth so ill-supplied with materials for reading for those who are not rich. I have read an account of a Public Library in Iceland, which the King of Denmark founded there. There is not a peasant in Iceland that cannot bring home books to his hut, better than men can in London. Positively it is a kind of disgrace to us, which we ought to assemble and put an end to with all convenient despatch. The founding of a Library is one of the greatest things we can do with regard to results. It is one of the quietest of things; but, there is nothing that I know of at bottom more important. Every one able to read a good book becomes a wiser man. He becomes a similar centre of light and order, and just insight into the things around him.

"A collection of good books contains all the nobleness and wisdom of the world before us. Every heroic and victorious soul has left his stamp upon it. A collection of books is the best of all Universities; for the University only teaches us how to read the book: you must go to the book itself for what it is. I call it a church also—which every devout soul may enter—a church but with no quarrelling, no church-rates . . ."

The remainder of the sentence was drowned in cheers and laughter, in the midst of which Mr. Carlyle sat down.

The chairman and speakers at the meeting were nominated as members of the committee to draw up rules and organize the library and at their first meeting, held at 450A West Strand in July 1840, the following attended: Carlyle, Gladstone, Lord Lyttelton, G. Cornwall Lewis, Monkton Milnes, Philip Pusey and George Venables.

Subsequent meetings were held at 57 and later at 49 Pall Mall.



At the meeting held on 28th November, 1840, it was resolved to open the library on 1st May, 1841, afterwards altered to the 3rd, and a circular was issued calling in promised subscriptions and stating the opinion of the committee that "the establishment of the library will be a great benefit to all residents in London . . . to all followers of literature and science who cannot study with comfort and advantage in a public room . . . and to all families both in London and the country who, needing more books than they can afford to purchase, have now no other resource than the comparatively meagre one of circulating libraries".

On 27th January, 1841, Carlyle proposed J. G. Cochrane as librarian and he was duly elected and acted until 1852.

In the meantime, Christie, inspired by Carlyle, had issued in 1841 a pamphlet with the title "Explanation of the scheme of the London Library". In this he gave a short survey of the libraries of other countries and emphasized the need for, and usefulness of, the proposed establishment in London of a library which should contain books in all departments of literature and philosophy, and in all languages. "Its chief distinguishing feature will be the privilege enjoyed by subscribers of having books at their homes both in London and in the country." He hinted at a total membership of 5,000, a total only reached three years ago.

Christie ended with the words, "a Lending Library, worthy of the City and of the Nation, to aid and bless learners and teachers alike, strengthening with strong food or soothing with soft medicines the souls of the many, guiding and lightening the labours of those who build up the nation's wisdom and the nation's fame. . . . May it be given to me to see the plant which we have planted and whose young growth we have watched and watered become, by the nation's care, a mighty tree flourishing and bringing forth fruit, growing ever and strengthening, scattering bounties innumerable, standing through future ages, green and strong, a blessing and a glory to the land."

These lengthy quotations from the initial proceedings of the library's promoters are given as they explain the ideals proposed for the library. These ideals were again set forth by Lord Balfour who, presiding at the library's annual meeting on 14th June, 1906, said, "The London Library did not pretend to rival or, indeed, to occupy any portion of the field which was so well occupied by the ordinary lending libraries. The work done by the latter was important and

valuable, but it was not the work of their institution nor was it a work with which they could with advantage compete.

"The London Library existed for all those who desired to have at their command the literature of all ages and countries, to have it accessible and to have it in a shape in which they could use it, not merely in that building, but in their own homes.

"He was informed that, so far as foreign literature was concerned there was really no institution in the country in which the best foreign works were so well represented. That their institution carried out the purposes for which it was brought into existence was conclusively shown by the character of the books which were taken out, and which certainly proved that they were not merely turned to the purpose of spending an idle hour agreeably, but that the resources of the library were used in the most important works of historic, scientific and philosophical research."

Three months were devoted to the selection and purchase of books and on 3rd May, 1841, the library was opened. It began in two rooms at 49 Pall Mall rented at £150 a year, with a collection of 3,000 books and a membership of about 500, only 15 of whom were women. There are now 5,250 members, of whom about a third are women. Original members paid an entrance fee of £6 and an annual subscription of £2. Later the entrance fee was reduced and the annual subscription raised, firstly to £3 then to £3 3s. and in 1926 to £4 4s.

The Earl of Clarendon was the library's first President and remained so until his death in 1870 when Carlyle was elected, to be succeeded by Lord Houghton (1881), Lord Tennyson (1885), Sir Leslie Stephen (1893), Earl Balfour (1904), the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher (1930), the Earl of Ilchester (1940). The Prince Consort consented to be Patron of the library which has, throughout its 100 years, continued under royal patronage.

By 1845 the two rooms were inadequate and the library was moved to its present position, 12 (now numbered 14) St. James's Square, then known as Beauchamp House, at first on a lease with the Royal Statistical Society as sub-tenant and later as owner of the freehold. Gladstone's advice is said to have decided the committee in 1879 to make the purchase for £21,000. The property included stables with exit at No. 7 Duke St. and a house known as No. 9 Duke St. Beauchamp House soon became overcrowded with books, although the shelves reached from floor to ceiling, and Hagberg

Wright, on his appointment as librarian in 1893, saw the necessity of re-building. Donations were invited and a loan raised with the result that by 1897 the premises were transferred into a well equipped library with a long entrance hall, reading room and bookstacks in which ladders were no longer needed.

An additional book store of seven floors designed to hold 180,000 volumes was built on No. 7 Duke St. in 1922 and No. 9 Duke St. was rebuilt and incorporated in the northern extension which was completed in 1934. This new building took in adjoining property in Mason's Yard and provided an addition to the reading room, a new committee room, staff rooms and five floors of bookstacks.

The library owns the Freehold of all this property as well as of No. 8 Duke St. which was acquired in 1913 to make possible by removal of basements and "ancient lights" the building of the stack on part of No. 7. To enable these properties to be purchased and the buildings to be erected, members contributed generously from time to time to donation funds, and sums were reserved from the library's yearly revenue. Mortgage debentures which were also issued have now all been redeemed.

It was the extension in Mason's Yard that was hit by a high explosive bomb during the night of 23rd February, 1944. The bomb exploded on contact, but even so it wrecked the top four floors of the latest bookstacks and the blast did extensive damage to other parts of the library which had to be closed for four months while books were salvaged and re-arranged. Otherwise the library functioned throughout the war, a selection of the scarcest books only being evacuated. The wrecked store has still to be re-built. The oldest periodicals which were on the top floor suffered most damage, especially those with titles beginning with letters in the second half of the alphabet. There were also heavy losses in theological books and in biographies of persons with names beginning with letters from G to J and from S to Z. About 16,000 volumes were either destroyed or too badly damaged to be worth binding.

#### ADMINISTRATION

At its foundation the library was governed by a President, four Vice-Presidents, three Trustees and a Committee of twenty-four elected from among the members of the library. In 1934 the King was graciously pleased to accede to the Committee's request for a Royal Charter. This made no difference to the library's policy or

rules except that Trustees were no longer necessary and the number of Vice-Presidents was increased to not more than seven. The Charter gave the library a status which it had hitherto not possessed.

The books in the library have been carefully selected during its 100 years with the help of a long succession of learned and critical students and, as Mr. Frederic Harrison said in 1911, "I believe it now contains all the volumes which a general reader, or even a special student ordinarily has in use."

In the past there have worked on the committee and laboured to build up its store of books such eminent historians as Thomas Carlyle, George Grote, H. Hallam, T. B. Macaulay, J. A. Froude, Earl Stanhope, Sir James Stephen, W. H. Lecky, J. Cotter Morison, Sir Adolphus Ward, Goldwin Smith, Viscount Bryce, H. A. L. Fisher, Sir Herbert Richmond.

Such men of science as Alfred R. Wallace, Professor Huxley, Professor Clifford, Sir J. Lubbock, Herbert Spencer, Sir Francis Galton, St. George Mivart, G. J. Romanes, Sir Archibald Geikie, Sir Arthur Keith, Sir Frederick Treves.

Such critics as John Forster, Arthur Helps, Lord Houghton, Henry Reeve, G. H. Lewes, J. J. Jusserand, Mark Pattison, W. Courthope, Andrew Lang, Dr. W. Smith, Sir Sidney Lee, Sir Edmund Gosse.

Such divines as Bishop Wilberforce, Archbishop Trench, Dean Stanley, Dean Bradley, Frederick Maurice, Dean Milman, Archdeacon Cheetham, Dr. Vaughan, Bishop Thirlwell, Dean Wace, Dean Inge.

Such eminent writers as W. M. Thackeray, Walter Besant, Charles Kingsley, Bunsen, Spedding, Tennyson, Richard Hutton, Leslie Stephen, George Meredith.

The General Committee now meet ten times a year and the Finance Sub-committee about the same number of times. Members of the library meet once a year to pass the annual report and to elect members of committee, etc. The chair is usually taken by the President or, in his absence by a Vice-President, who is supported by members of committee. Many interesting speeches on these occasions have been made by eminent statesmen, historians, critics and others. Among Vice-Presidents who took the chair have been the Duke of Northumberland (1919), the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1923), Viscount Ullswater (1927), Viscount Haldane (1928).

A special meeting was held on 5th December, 1898, for the

ceremony of the opening of the new building, when Lord Wolseley took the chair and Leslie Stephen, as President, declared the building open. A similar meeting took place on 13th April, 1934, when the new wing was formally opened by the Marquess of Crewe, speeches also being made by the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, Earl Baldwin, and the Earl of Ilchester.

The anticipated celebration of the library's centenary to be held in 1941 was prevented by the war but special mention was made at the annual meeting on 16th July by the President and G. M. Trevelyan, O.M., and the *Times literary supplement*, 3rd May, 1941, devoted a whole page to an article on the library by the late Harold Child.

The instructions of the committee are carried out by the secretary who is also the librarian.

The following were appointed to this office: J. G. Cochrane in 1841, William Bodham Donne in 1852, Robert Harrison in 1857, C. T. Hagberg Wright, L.L.D. (Knighted in 1934) in 1893, C. J. Purnell (formerly sub-librarian) in 1940.

Donne's appointment was strongly supported by Carlyle against Gladstone's nomination of J. P. Lacaite. The story is told in Harrison's *Carlyle and the London Library*. Carlyle took little part in the management of the library after Donne's appointment. The latter resigned in 1857 when he was appointed examiner of plays. Wright's appointment in 1893 was a most fortunate one for the library and after his death in 1940 the following tribute was written of him: "It is certainly no exaggeration to say that the library as it is today is the creation of Sir Charles Hagberg Wright." He lived up to Carlyle's ideal expressed in 1840. "He will be as a wise servant, watchful, diligent, discerning what is what, incessantly endeavouring, *rough-hewing* all things for us, and under the guise of a wise servant, *ruling* while he actually serves."

In 1924 the committee inaugurated a staff superannuation scheme (non-contributory). The fund has been built up by generous gifts from members of the library and by sums set aside annually by the library till it has now been declared by actuaries to be adequate for its purpose. It is administered by the Public Trustee.

In addition to the books selected from time to time by the committee, the collection has been enriched by the purchase of books required by members working on some special subject. Many uncommon books difficult to procure nowadays are in consequence

to be found on the library's shelves and Sir Hagberg Wright's special interest in Russia and her literature resulted in the library having one of the best Russian libraries in England.

The library is specially strong in books on Philosophy, History, Literature (English and Foreign), Topography, Archaeology and Art, while Theology is well represented. Only general books on Science are purchased, but Natural History is not neglected and the library has some fine books such as Gould's *Birds of Great Britain* (presented by the late P. A. Cohen) and Mathew's *Birds of Australia*. Among out of the way collections is that of literary and historical letters and documents printed by Italian scholars as gifts on marriages of friends and known as "Per Nozze". The library also possesses many valuable sets of periodicals and publications of learned societies such as the *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen zu Wien*, publications of the Literarischer Verein in Stuttgart and of the Roxburghe Club, to give a few examples.

The largest addition to the library made by purchase was that of the Allan Library bought in 1920. Though largely Theological, this contains many historical works and is rich in contemporary Reformation tracts and early editions of the Bible and includes also about seventy Incunabula. The interest on the purchase money is used by the Allan Trustees in part payment of the subscriptions of Methodist ministers.

Gifts and bequests have been numerous. The Prince Consort, shortly after the foundation of the library, gave various books including *Antiquités mexicaines*, 2 vols. folio. Napoleon III, who used the library while living in nearby King Street, presented volumes of the monumental *Histoire générale de Paris*.

Mr. John Chorley, in 1854, gave many rare Spanish plays and arranged a series of similar dramas purchased by the library a year later.

John Stuart Mill gave many philosophical works and Mrs. Mackay 6,000 volumes, chiefly philosophical and theological, used by her husband Robert William Mackay while writing his *Progress of the intellect*. Mrs. Edwin Edwards, in 1883, presented some 400 books written by foreigners about England—these volumes form the bulk of a collection labelled on the shelves *Foreign Impressions of England*.

The executors of Sir Leslie Stephen presented the books which



he had used while writing his *History of English thought in the 18th century*, Austin Dobson shortly before his death gave his set of Hogarth prints and his family subsequently added books relating to the same period, Sir Sidney Lee bequeathed early sixteenth century editions of Italian poets, and Sir Edmund Gosse gave a hundred or so Scandinavian books used for his *Studies in the literature of Northern Europe*.

The bequests of F. C. Conybeare's Armenian Library and of Sir Ernest Wallis Budge's Ethiopic, etc., books and the gift by the late Alfred E. Hippenley of his collection of Chinese histories, etc., added considerably to the library's Oriental section.

The library owes to the late Mr. P. A. Cohen the possession of a Fourth Folio Shakespeare, and a magnificent copy of the Kelmscott Chaucer bound at the Doves Press bindery, as well as the facsimile of the Ellesmere Chaucer and many valuable books with coloured plates such as Ackermann's *Microcosm of London* and Pyne's *History of the Royal Residences*, the purchase of which the library could not have afforded.

The late Mr. John F. Baddeley gave during his lifetime much valuable material, largely in Russian, for the history of the Caucasus and Mongolia and bequeathed the remainder of his collections to the library. He also gave a large collection of portraits and prints of London formed by his mother, Mrs. Fraser Baddeley, which are shelved in special cases in the Art Room.

Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, a trustee of the library for many years, in addition to many other books and money gifts, presented a copy of the Aldine Theocritus, 1495, adorned by an illuminated border and pastoral scene attributed to Dürer. The volume belonged to Pirckheimer and has his book-plate designed by Dürer. Mrs. Thompson later bequeathed a selection from her husband's library of books mostly connected with illuminated MSS. to the value of £500, and an additional £500 was given through the generosity of the executors. Lord Riddell left his collection of books to the library, and more recently Mrs. J. W. Mackail gave from her husband's library such books as were not already possessed.

The library does not buy manuscripts, but a few have been presented from time to time, including an illuminated Ethiopic Life of St. George bequeathed by Wallis Budge, John Mill's commonplace books and Charles Reade's collection of cuttings and notes used as material for his novels.

## ARRANGEMENT OF BOOKS

When Hagberg Wright came from the National Library of Ireland, of which he was sub-librarian and which he helped to re-classify according to Dewey, he decided not to adopt this system for the London Library.

Instead he arranged the books in large groups such as History, Literature, Religion, Science, Topography, etc., each of which occupied separate floors of bookstacks. These he subdivided into smaller divisions which are arranged alphabetically. The books in these subdivisions are arranged alphabetically under their authors' names or the word under which they appear in the Author Catalogue. This is ticked on the title-page and the subject division is written on the back of the title-page and entered in the marked copy of the Catalogue or on the tops of the cards. The following are examples of shelf-markings: H. Assyria for History, subdivision Assyria. S. Birds for Science, subdivision Birds.

By this method members of the staff and readers can find most books without looking them up in the Catalogue, and the books can be shifted when necessary without alteration in the Catalogue.

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are arranged alphabetically under their subjects in the reading room where the current numbers of periodicals, annuals, etc., are also kept. Bound volumes of periodicals and serial publications of societies are shelved in alphabetical order of their titles in the bookstacks. A bound set of *The Times* from 1812 is kept in the basement where are also Parliamentary Papers and a collection of over 3,000 volumes of pamphlets.

## CATALOGUES

The first Catalogue of the library was printed in 1842 and ran to 140 pages octavo. Supplements were issued in 1843 and 1844 and new editions in 1847, 1865, 1875 and 1888. Hagberg Wright compiled an entirely new Catalogue in 1903 of 1,626 double-column quarto pages and a new edition brought up to date was issued in 1913-14 in 2 vols. of 1,400 and 1,340 pages. Supplements were printed in 1920 and 1928. British Museum practice has been followed with some exceptions but titles of books have been abbreviated for the sake of economy.

A Subject Index arranged alphabetically was issued in 1909 with Supplements in 1923 and 1938. These volumes included much material not found in other indexes and are used extensively in libraries in this country and in the United States of America.

## CHAPTER XIII

# THE LAW LIBRARIES OF LONDON

By A. R. HEWITT

*Assistant Librarian, Hon. Society of the Middle Temple*

The principal law libraries of London are those of the four Inns of Court, namely, the Inner Temple, the Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn; the Bar Library in the Royal Courts of Justice and the Law Society's Library. The functions and purpose of these libraries are to provide members of the legal profession with the literature and material necessary to enable them to prepare and conduct cases in the Courts, to advise clients, to pursue research and, generally, to further the administration of Justice. Each of these libraries is open to members of the Institution of which it is a part and the public are not admitted. In exceptional cases, however, non-members may be permitted to consult works which are not obtainable elsewhere. The library of each Inn of Court is for the use of its own members, i.e. benchers, barristers and students, but members of other Inns are, of course, allowed access to books not available in their own library. The ravages of war have now made this co-operation a common occurrence. The Bar Library in the Law Courts is for the use of members of all the Inns, whilst the Law Society's Library is for the exclusive use of solicitors and their clerks.

### FOUNDATION OF THE LIBRARIES

The Inns of Court are of great antiquity. The date of their foundation is unknown but they were certainly functioning late in the fourteenth century. Their history, tradition and place in the life of the nation is too well known to need further description in a paper of this nature and it is proposed, therefore, to speak only of their libraries.

It is difficult to state with any degree of exactitude when the libraries of the Inns were founded. In the Inner Temple Records the first reference to a library appears in a minute dated 29th June,

1506, when two members of the Inn were "assigned a chamber newly made under the Library" and it may be assumed, therefore, that the library was certainly in existence before the end of the fifteenth century.

Information concerning the foundation of the library of the Middle Temple is scanty. The earliest reference occurs in a manuscript (preserved in the British Museum) ascribed to the reign of Henry VIII which states "they now have no library" and that "they had a simple library, in which were not many bookes besides the law and that library by meanes that it stood allways open and that the learners had not each of them a key unto it, it was the last robbed of all the bookes in it". The library was re-founded in 1641 when Robert Ashley, a member of the Society, died and bequeathed his collection of books and the sum of £300 to the Inn.

The Records of Lincoln's Inn are the earliest of any of the Inns of Court (commencing as they do in 1422) and a library is first mentioned on the 13th July, 1475, when the sum of 30s. was paid to a Roger Towneshend "pro bibliotheca". In 1505 John Nethersale, a member of the Society, bequeathed 40 marks partly towards rebuilding the library and partly for the singing of a mass for his soul. It is only fair to acknowledge the claim of Lincoln's Inn to possession of the oldest library.

The earliest mention of Gray's Inn in the Records of the Society is dated 1568 but a library existed some years before that date as is evidenced by the will, dated 7th July, 1555, of a Robert Chaloner who left his books to a cousin, Robert Nowell, and a sum of money so that "he maie by cheines therewith and fasten so manye of them in the Librarye at Grauisin as he shall think convenyente".

The Bar Library was established in 1883 and the Library of the Law Society in 1828.

#### THE LIBRARIES AND EARLY EDUCATION

Although the Records of the Inns of Court contain many references to their libraries, little information is available as to the legal works possessed by the Societies. Legal literature was scanty until the dawn of the seventeenth century and it is known that the contents of the libraries consisted mainly of works on philosophy, theology, Canon law, mathematics, algebra, medicine and witchcraft. The possession of works of this nature reflects the type of education afforded by the Inns which was not, by any means, confined

to the study and practice of the law. The Inns were, in fact, regarded as universities, law being the principal faculty. Sir John Fortescue in his *De laudibus legum angliae* (written c. 1470), giving an account of the part played by the Inns of Court and Chancery in the life of England in his time, says :

“ And to speake uprightly ther is in these greater Innes, yea and in the lesser to, besides the study of the laws as it were an university or schoole of all commendable qualities requisite for Noblemen. There they learn to sing and to exercise themselves in all kinde of harmony. There also they practice dauncing and other Noblemen's pastimes as they use to doe which are brought up in the King's house. On the working daies most of them apply themselves to the studie of the lawe. And on the holy daies to the studie of Holy Scripture ; and out of the time of Devine Service to the reading of Chronicles. For there indeede are vertues studied and vices exiled. So that, for the endowment of virtue and abandoning of vice, Knights and Barons, with other States and Noblemen of the Realme place their children in those Innes, though they desire not to have them learned in the Lawes, nor to live by the practice thereof, but onely upon their Fathers Allowance.”

#### INNER TEMPLE

The Inner Temple Library has, on several occasions, suffered damage by fire. One building was burned down during the great fire of 1666 and another blown up in 1678 to prevent the spread of another fire in the Temple. What damage to, or loss of, books was sustained during the great fire does not seem to have been known but on the occasion of the fire of 1678 the books were removed before the explosion. It was again destroyed by fire in 1941 due to enemy action. On that occasion more than half the contents, namely the general library other than law, amounting to approximately 45,000 volumes, had been sent to the country but a tragic loss was the destruction of its entire legal collection of some 45,000 volumes.

The Inn's general collection is one of which the Society may feel proud. It consists chiefly of works on genealogy, county histories and biographies and includes a fine collection of works of the poets, essayists and dramatists. Its most famous possession is the Petyt MSS., which, happily, were saved from destruction.

William Petyt, a former Keeper of the Records of the Tower, who died in 1707, left his manuscripts and books, together with the sum of £150 towards a new library building, to the Society. These manuscripts consist of original letters of Kings and Queens of England, diplomatists, foreign agents and other distinguished persons.

Its legal collection, before destruction, was of a high order, including, naturally, law reports, statutes, abridgments, periodicals and textbooks. Since the war an attempt has been made to obtain by gift and purchase a law library of books required for day-to-day use by the Bar but many of their former legal treasures are irreplaceable. Much of the general library is still away from London and the working law library is housed in a set of chambers in the Temple and in a temporary ex-naval hut in the Inner Temple Garden. Although detailed plans for the future have not been disclosed, it is the intention of the Society to build and equip a modern library in which to house their collection.

#### MIDDLE TEMPLE

Although the Middle Temple Library building was badly damaged during the war and rendered unusable, its entire collection of books was, happily, saved. The old building in the Garden was blasted on five occasions and it was at last found necessary to demolish it down to the first-floor level. The majority of the books had been removed to the country in 1941 where they remained until 1946 when a new temporary library was opened by Her Majesty the Queen in November of that year.

As previously mentioned, a writer in the reign of Henry VIII lamented the fact that, because the library "stood allways open" it was robbed of all its books, an unfortunate state of affairs which continued until 1641 when the library was re-founded. In that year died Robert Ashley, a member of the Inn, who bequeathed his own library and a sum of £300 to the Inn, describing it as "this noble Society of the Middle Temple in which I have spent so many years of my life". A catalogue of his books was prepared but unfortunately it no longer exists. About thirty-five volumes may still, however, be identified as belonging to Ashley.

Very little expenditure was allowed for the purchase of books in the early days but the library was fortunate in receiving several substantial benefactions of both books and money. Unfortunately the offer of the John Selden Library, numbering about 8,000 volumes,



was refused as it was found that the accommodation required was more extensive than the Society could afford. Selden's Library had previously been offered to both the Inner Temple and Lincoln's Inn and refused also on the grounds of lack of accommodation. It ultimately found a home in the Bodleian.

The library has been housed in many places in the Inn throughout its history. Ashley's books were first placed under lock and key in one of the Parliament Chambers but this arrangement, naturally, proved very unsatisfactory and in 1650 a set of chambers was fitted up as a library. In 1824 the books were moved to the New Parliament Chamber which was fitted up to serve also as a library. Owing to the rapid expansion of the library this accommodation did not serve long, in spite of the erection of a gallery in the chamber and the incorporation of three store rooms below. In 1854 the foundations were laid for an entirely new building in the Garden to include two floors of professional chambers. The new library was opened by H.M. King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales. In due time the chambers were absorbed into the library but even that encroachment did not solve the problem of space which was becoming acute by the time of the outbreak of the late war. As previously mentioned, the building was rendered unsafe by enemy action and a temporary library was erected over a static water tank on the site of Nos. 2 and 3 Brick Court, Temple, which had been demolished early in the war. This library has a steel framework, walls of brick and a concrete floor. Apart from the steel girders and floor, the greater part of the material used was salvaged from war-damaged buildings in the Temple and, although described as a "temporary" building, it is substantially constructed and will last many years. It covers an area of 4,524 square feet and consists of one main reading and reference room with staff rooms and a small common room. The body of the water tank forms an excellent basement bookstack. Whether the shelf space available in this building will be sufficient to meet all needs for the next few years remains to be seen, but construction of a new building cannot be contemplated for a considerable time. Plans have already been drawn up for the building of a magnificent new permanent library providing accommodation for approximately 200,000 volumes. It is to be erected on the site of the old library.

The Middle Temple Library is rich in works on English law and is very well supplied with Scottish, Irish, Indian, Dominion and

Colonial law. It contains a fine collection of books on international, Roman-Dutch and foreign law and its collection of American law and reports, to which reference will be made again later, is the finest in Europe. General literature, topography and genealogy are well represented. The total number of volumes in the library is now approximately 75,000.

#### LINCOLN'S INN

Lincoln's Inn enjoys the distinction of possessing the oldest law library but, like the other Inns of Court, little of value is known about its early history. The building to which John Nethersale contributed in 1505 was completed in the year 1508 but its site is unknown. As the library grew it moved about the Inn and it is known to have been housed in rooms in Stone Buildings and Old Square, Lincoln's Inn. The present building was opened in 1845 and extended in 1872. It consists of one large main reading and reference room with the usual rooms below and adjacent which have been absorbed into the library from time to time. As in the case of most libraries of today, space available is totally inadequate and the time is not far distant when the problem must be faced of still further accommodation in addition to, or in place of, the present building.

The early growth of the library was slow. During the first 100 years few books were added and in 1608 an order was made by the Council that new Masters of the Bench should contribute a sum of 20s. and that every new barrister should contribute a sum of 13s. 4d. towards the purchase and presentation of books until it reached the high standard it enjoys today. It contains not only a fine legal collection but also a representative library of historical, topographical and biographical works. The Inn is justly proud of its manuscripts. It possesses the Hale, Melmouthe, Hill and Maynard collections which, together with others, number some 1,000 volumes. Sir Mathew Hale was a renowned lawyer and legal writer and was Lord Chief Justice in 1671. His manuscripts, together with those of Sir John Maynard, who was a King's Serjeant and a Judge in the reign of Charles II, are of great historical and intrinsic value. The library also possesses a collection of over 2,000 early historical tracts and pamphlets.

Happily, Lincoln's Inn Library escaped all damage during the war and its collection, now numbering 75,000 volumes, remains unimpaired.

## GRAY'S INN

The library of Gray's Inn as it exists today is but a shadow of the library of the past. Early in the war, during one of the incendiary bomb attacks on London, the entire library was destroyed by fire. The items saved from destruction were few: some illuminated manuscripts, a few chained books (including Raleigh's *History of the World*, Coke's *Institutes* and Coke on Littleton) and approximately 160 volumes of Baconiana. The rest, general literature and law, were burned. Since the destruction, a collection of law reports, statutes, legal textbooks, etc., together with a few classics, has been obtained by gift and purchase amounting to about 11,000 volumes in all. They are housed in a prefabricated building in the Garden. Plans for the rebuilding of the greater part of Gray's Inn have been drawn up and include a modern library.

Before its destruction Gray's Inn Library had occupied the site since 1788, enlargements having been made in 1840, 1884 and 1926 when the Holker Library was opened. It possessed approximately 35,000 volumes and was the smallest of the Inns' libraries. It included a good working law library and a representative collection of general literature.

## ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE LIBRARIES

The Bar Library in the Royal Courts of Justice was founded in 1883 jointly by the four Inns of Court and was originally intended as a reference library for members of the Bar of all the Inns having business in the Courts. It is now regarded, however, as the library of the Royal Courts of Justice in spite of the fact that it is maintained by the Bar for the Bar. It is managed by a joint committee of eight members, two from each Inn, and the cost of books, binding and salaries is met by the Inns in agreed proportions. Other expenses (lighting, heating, etc.) are born by the Treasury. It contains some 30,000 volumes almost entirely dealing with law and its function is to provide the practising barrister with the reference books necessary for the proper presentation of his cases in Court. It has a very fine collection of American and British Empire statutes and of House of Lords cases.

In addition to the Bar Library there are several smaller libraries throughout the Law Courts which are housed in the various Court rooms. The largest of these are in the Appeal Courts, the Lord Chief Justice's Court and the other King's Bench Courts. The

control and supervision of these libraries is exercised by the librarian of the Bar Library but the expense of maintenance is born entirely by the Treasury.

Finally, there is the Probate Library, also housed in the Courts, which, like the others, is controlled by the librarian of the Bar Library. It is a subscription library and the subscribers (who are members of the Bar) are entitled to borrow books therefrom. It was formerly known as the Chancery Library and was established in 1831 at Westminster where the Courts of Law then sat, until 1883 when it was moved to the Law Courts in the Strand.

#### THE LAW SOCIETY

The Law Society's Library is of comparatively recent foundation. In June 1828 a member of the Society named Metcalfe presented a set of the *Statutes-at-large* and round this single gift has developed the splendid library possessed by the Society today. Donations of books and money for the purchase of books have been received from judges, barristers and members of the Society so that, in spite of the fact that it was founded so many years after the libraries of the Inns of Court, it now ranks as one of the great law libraries.

It possesses a fine collection of statutes, law reports and legal textbooks. In addition to the law collection the library is rich in almost complete sets of Directories, Court Guides, Army and Navy lists, Clergy lists, Law lists and University and other Calendars. There is a complete set of the *London gazette* from its commencement in 1665 (probably unique) and of *The Times* newspaper (except for one year). It also possesses a fine collection of Local Acts of Parliament, Parliamentary Papers and Appeal Cases in the House of Lords since 1700 and in the Privy Council since 1854. A noteworthy collection is the Mendham Library which was formerly the property of the Rev. Joseph Mendham, a scholar of some standing, which was presented to the Society in 1870. It consists of historical and theological works, books and pamphlets on theological controversy, editions of the Old and New Testaments and liturgies. It is now, however, more of antiquarian than of practical value.

The library, which contains approximately 74,000 volumes, is for the use of members and their clerks but the Council may admit other fit and proper persons to use the library on such terms and conditions as they may lay down. The Society also maintains a students' library at the Students' Centre, Lancaster Gate, London.

## CONTENTS OF THE LAW LIBRARIES

Space does not permit a detailed description of the contents of the individual libraries which are all of a similar character and it is proposed, therefore, for the benefit of those having little knowledge or experience of law libraries and legal literature, to mention, very briefly and simply, the type of works to be found in such a library. The works referred to in the following paragraphs are to be found in the libraries of the Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn and the Law Society and to a certain extent in the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn. Undoubtedly, the latter two libraries will, in the course of time, gather together a collection once more comparable with those of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn which were fortunate enough to have escaped the very extensive damage suffered by the other two Inns.

Further, it is impossible to mention the early printed legal works and classics, a subject which in itself would occupy more space than has been allotted to the whole of this paper. Each library possesses (or did possess, as the case may be) a fine collection of old statutes, digests, abridgments, reports and textbooks, some of considerable intrinsic value and all of great antiquarian and historical interest.

*Statutes.* One of the main sources of law is the statute law enacted by Parliament and a law library must, as a first essential, contain sets of Acts of Parliament (public, local and private), together with the Rules and Orders made under statutory authority and other instruments having the force of law. Statutes of the Realm have been issued by Royal authority from the earliest times, but many collections, revisions, digests and abridgments have been privately issued and are of considerable importance. Various indices to statutes have also been published but only one of practical value now remains and is issued periodically by H.M. Stationery Office.

*Law Reports.* Reports of cases heard and determined by the Courts are many in number, amounting to some thousands of volumes. The earliest reports were collected and issued as *Year books* which first appeared in printed form at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Volumes of reports were published either under the name of the judge delivering the judgments or, more frequently, under the name of the "reporter" compiling the record. Some were, and still are, issued under the title of the subject matter of the cases reported. The commencement of the first "Official" series of reports in 1865, namely *The law reports*, issued by the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting, really put an end to the individual

volumes of reports, although several continued to appear spasmodically for a few years after that date. Various series of reports of cases in all Courts began to appear in the nineteenth century—the *Law journal reports* (1822), the *Jurist* (1837), the *Law times reports* (1843), the *Times law reports* (1884) and so on. In addition to the series of general reports special series have been published from time to time, many of which are still being issued, for example, *Cox's criminal cases* (1843), *Bankruptcy and company cases* (1884), *Reports of patent cases* (1884), *Local government reports* (1903), *Lloyd's list law reports* (1919), to name only a few.

*Trials and Peerage Claims.* Mention must be made of those reports commonly referred to as "Trials" (both collections and individual cases) and "Peerage Claims". Trials are, for the most part, reports of famous criminal cases and some hundreds of volumes have been published in the course of time. Peerage Claims are very numerous and consist of the documents, evidence and judgments in Claims to peerages submitted to, and determined by, the Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords.

*Digests.* Such a mass of reported cases mentioned would be practically useless without the Digests which give the main points of decided cases, collected together according to their subject matter or under the branch of law they illustrate. The first Digests were of Statute law, or both Statute law and reported Cases, but, apart from an historical interest, the early works are of little practical value today. They have been superseded by the encyclopaedic works now in common use—*Mew's digest* (first published in 1882) and the *English and Empire digest* (which commenced publication in 1919). The several series of reports also have Digests of cases reported in those series—the *Law reports*, the *Law journal*, *Lloyd's list*, etc.

*Textbooks.* The next branch of legal literature to which reference must be made is the textbook, a term which is really self-explanatory. The earliest law books were, of course, in manuscript, usually compiled for the writer's own use and guidance. The beginning of printing saw the beginning of legal textbooks as we know them today, since when they have appeared in ever increasing numbers on all conceivable branches of law, some good and some bad; some classics and some of mere passing interest.

*Legal Periodicals.* The first of the great legal periodicals or journals was the *Law magazine*, first published in 1829. Many



have appeared and, having served a purpose, have passed away. The chief periodicals of today are the *Justice of the peace* (which commenced publication in 1838), the *Law times* (1843), the *Solicitors journal*, or *Weekly reporter* as it was first called (1857), the *Law journal* (1866) and the *Law quarterly review* (1885). Other current series not of such early date are the *Journal of comparative legislation*, *Law notes*, *Cambridge law journal*, the *Modern law review* and the *Journal of criminal law*.

*Encyclopaediae.* Legal encyclopaediae are a comparatively modern innovation (if we exclude some of the old Abridgments of Law). The *Encyclopaedia of English law* appeared in 1896 and Halsbury's *Laws of England* in 1907. Others are the *Encyclopaedia of forms and precedents* (1902), the *Encyclopaedia of local government* (1905) and the *Encyclopaedia of court forms* (1937). New editions and supplements have been issued from time to time. They are monumental works in many volumes and are invaluable aids to practice and research.

*Other Works.* There are, of course, innumerable legal works or types of work to which reference ought to be made if space permitted, but it is hoped that most important branches of legal literature have been included in the foregoing summary.

*General Literature.* In addition to those works which might be described as purely legal in character, a good law library will contain sets of Parliamentary Papers, Calendars of State Papers, Journals and Debates of both Houses of Parliament, the *London gazette*, *The Times* newspaper, a selection of publications of learned societies, calendars and reference books and a representative collection of works on history, biography, travel, topography, medicine, English literature, etc.

*Law other than English.* So far English law only has been reviewed but a law library must also contain a collection of a similar character relating to Scotland, Ireland, India, the Dominions and Colonies and the United States of America, with a selection of works on Roman law, Roman-Dutch law, and foreign and international law. It is interesting to recall that, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone for the old Middle Temple Library in 1858, Sir Fortunatus Dwarrris, the Master Treasurer, said a law library "ought to contain the laws of all ages, and of all the countries, and the laws which govern them; the *legum leges*. Next, the most important, that it should show the application of those laws in the

thousands and tens of thousands of adjudged cases, reported from all the Courts."

*Scotland and Ireland.* Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire have distinct systems of law with their own statutes, reports, digests, encyclopaediae, periodicals and textbooks. The number of volumes involved is not, fortunately, so great as that in England but the statutes and reports, with a selection of textbooks, periodicals, etc., must be available in an English law library.

*Empire Law.* The Dominion and Colonial and Indian sections of the library can be very extensive and, broadly speaking, each dominion, province of a dominion and colony has its own series of statutes or ordinances and reports, totalling many thousands of volumes. Colonial legislation alone is considerable as every colony is obliged, under Colonial Office Regulations, to supply copies of its laws and ordinances to the four Inns of Court, the Bar Library and the Law Society, among other institutions. The Dominions also send copies of their Acts and other legislation to those libraries as a matter of courtesy.

India is prolific in the publication of laws and reports, copies of which are also delivered to the libraries previously mentioned.

In addition to statutes and reports a selection of textbooks, digests and periodicals of the Dominions and Colonies and of India must also be available.

*American Law.* The basis of American law is the English Common law and there is, as a result, a close affinity between the English and American legal systems. The sources of law of both nations are constantly referred to in the Courts and in the literature of the two countries. It is essential, therefore, that a representative collection of American law books should be available in this country. The law libraries have all attempted in some measure to meet this need but the Middle Temple Library has been the only library to provide such literature to any great extent. The Middle Temple's collection of case-law is complete, containing as it does reports of cases in the several States of the Union and in the Federal Courts, both individual State reports and the reports issued in the "National Reporter System". It also contains the *American digest*, an enormous work occupying 54 feet of shelving; the *Corpus juris* and the *Corpus juris secundum*, an encyclopaedic work totalling to date 145 volumes (the *Corpus juris secundum* is still in course of publication); a selection of the more important legal periodicals; the *United*

*States code annotated*; the *Restatements of the law*; the Federal Statutes and a few textbooks. In an effort to reduce expenditure an arrangement was made between the Bar Library and the Middle Temple whereby the Bar Library subscribes to the Codes of Laws of the individual States and the Middle Temple to the "National Reporter System". Other American publications should be available but the financial outlay involved would be considerable and is an expense which one institution cannot reasonably incur.

#### OTHER LEGAL COLLECTIONS

Considerations of space have limited this survey to the principal law libraries but it is desirable to refer, if only briefly, to certain other libraries and legal collections in London.

The Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, contains a small reference library for practitioners of approximately 1,500 volumes on criminal law. It also possesses a valuable set (with a few gaps) of the Old Bailey Sessions Papers from 1777 to 1913.

The field of international law and relations is well served by the libraries of the Grotius Society, which possesses some 2,000 volumes on the subject, and of the International Law Association, which has a small library of 1,200 volumes. Both these libraries, which are for the use of their respective members, are housed temporarily in the Inner Temple. The Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House also has a fine collection of works on international law.

The Hardwicke Society, one of the legal debating societies, has an outstanding collection of Trials and works on advocates and advocacy, numbering some 1,200 volumes. The library is for the use of all members of the Hardwicke Society and is housed in Lincoln's Inn.

Of other legal collections in London, the largest and most representative are those in the House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries and in the Library of the London School of Economics. Law is also very well represented in the University Library and the Library of University College. The University's Institute of Advanced Legal Studies is in the process of forming a law library which will be a valuable addition to the resources available. The Royal Empire Society's collection was good, particularly in the field of Dominion and colonial law, but, unfortunately, it suffered severely

from enemy action as did that in the British Museum. Several Government Offices and Departments possess representative law libraries, particularly the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, while some of the larger metropolitan public libraries have established useful legal sections.

## CHAPTER XIV

# LONDON'S MEDICAL LIBRARIES

By W. R. LE FANU, M.A.

*Librarian, Royal College of Surgeons of England*

London is more richly provided with medical libraries than any other town in the world. There is no single library here comparable to the greatest medical libraries in America, but the library of the Royal Society of Medicine is not far behind them in scope and activity. The collections of historical medical books in the British Museum are unrivalled, and although not usually thought of as a medical library the Museum is supremely rich in this as in most fields, although the medical classes suffered severely from air-raid damage. The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, long known by repute and now at last becoming available to readers, contains one of the largest aggregations of medical books collected for their historical interest and will soon be recognized at its full worth, when its new policy of exhibitions, free access and published catalogues has had time to mature.

London's wealth in medical books is, however, partly immobilized by division among a number of libraries, not all of which are maintained up to the potential demand for their books and most of which are only partially known outside their own doors. There is no up-to-date published catalogue of any of the major medical libraries in London, and they are only groping towards adequate co-operation and correlation of activities. But certain individual libraries are very active. Before describing the most important of these libraries, I shall explain the framework of their mutual relations in a summary account of the evolution of the professional bodies which have collected and now maintain libraries. Finally, I shall discuss some problems and projects of this special group, the medical libraries, as a whole.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

Looking back to seek the emergence of professional organization among medical men, we find them in the sixteenth century divided

into *physicians*, doctors in the academic sense, trained in the traditional lore of their art and accordingly forming themselves into a learned college—The Royal College of Physicians, founded in 1518; *surgeons*, practical men active in the city or in the army, taking their place among citizens and merchants, who had grouped themselves in a guild since the late fourteenth century and joined with the barbers' guild, whose business included the daily practice of blood-letting, to form the Barber-Surgeons Company in 1540; and *apothecaries*, who, as their name shows, kept shop and dealt in medicines, and besides making up prescriptions for the physicians, practised medicine on their own responsibility—they also formed their city guild, the Society of Apothecaries, in 1617. For nearly three hundred years this grouping lasted, until the surgeons who had separated from the barbers in 1745 to form their independent city Company, attained the dignity of a college by royal incorporation in 1800, which became the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1843. All these bodies were professional corporations, admitting new members by examination and licensing them to practise. They still exist and continue these functions in a modified form. Changes in the system of medical education and licensing and the divorce of pharmacy from practice have brought physician and surgeon closer together and made the apothecary disappear, though the Society of Apothecaries still exists as a qualifying body but is now more akin to the other city guilds than to the medical colleges, which have lately been joined by a third, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, founded in 1929. Each of these bodies had and has its library.

#### MEDICAL SOCIETIES

Medical men played a leading part in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and were active in the Royal Society. During the next century they came to feel the need for scientific gatherings of their own. Two of these societies in London have a long and illustrious history: the Medical Society of London (1773) and the Royal Society of Medicine, founded in 1805 as the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society. Both have libraries of note. Many special societies which had grown up during the nineteenth century merged themselves and their libraries with the "Medico-chi", when the Royal Society of Medicine took its present shape in 1907; it is from that year that its great library really dates. Several special



societies still maintain independent libraries, more particularly those on the borders of medicine, such as the Pharmaceutical Society.

The growth of the profession in numbers and the encroachments of state legislation during the nineteenth century provoked a demand for societies of a more political and less purely academic purpose. The British Medical Association, founded in 1832, is the outstanding example of these. It has a large and actively developing library.

#### HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND RESEARCH

Medical education became standardized in the last century. The anatomy schools maintained by private teachers, both in London and outside, were taken over by the great hospitals and in turn affiliated to the universities. Most of these medical schools have libraries, some developed *ad hoc*, some growing out of older hospital libraries. Many of the great hospitals outside London have fine but neglected libraries; but in some places, of which Manchester is the best example, independent hospital, school and society libraries have amalgamated with mutual advantage and stimulation. There are other special medical libraries affiliated to universities of which the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is the most eminent. Some of the newer municipal hospitals are developing libraries for their medical staffs. Finally, with the growth of medical research as a whole-time vocation, various official and commercial bodies, who promote research, are creating libraries for their workers. The best of these is that of the Medical Research Council (1919).

#### THE MEDICAL LIBRARIES

In describing the individual libraries it will be simplest to consider them as they might come to the knowledge of a young man or woman entering on a medical career in London. The first acquaintance he forms with a medical library will be with the library of his school. It is regrettable, but with a few exceptions these libraries are disappointing. They are not correlated as a group, nor adequately maintained either in stock or staff, and little is done to interest students in medical literature or teach them how best to use it. Two notable exceptions are those of St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospital Medical Schools. Both these libraries have a representative collection of scientific periodicals and cater for the qualified staff as well as for the students. Each has an active, trained librarian.

St. Thomas's issues mimeographed lists of current periodicals each week and lists of new books monthly. The Wills Library at Guy's Hospital has notable collections and some of the other schools have useful libraries. Better than any of the individual school libraries is the Thane Library of Medical Sciences at University College, London. This is a self-contained department of the general college library and benefits from its efficient administration. It is called after George Dancer Thane, professor of anatomy from 1877 to 1919, and caters for the College Faculty of Medicine. It is primarily concerned with the literature useful to the teaching and research staff of the departments of anatomy and physiology. Its stock of basic periodicals is remarkably wide.

The most important specialist libraries open to students are those of the Royal College of Surgeons and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The library of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, which is in fact a private library for the use of the fellows and members of the college, has always been administered in a spirit of liberality. All qualified medical men and women, as well as medical students, are freely admitted to use the library for reference on the introduction of any member or fellow. In size it is the second general medical library in the Empire, exceeded only by the Royal Society of Medicine, though the British Medical Association Library surpasses it in the scope of its modern collections. It is particularly rich in the basic periodicals of medical science, especially those of anatomy and physiology. Primarily intended as a professional library for surgeons, it also serves the research departments of the college's museum. The Hunterian Museum was bought for the nation in 1799 from the executors of John Hunter, F.R.S., the greatest surgeon and biologist of that or perhaps any period. It was systematically developed as a teaching museum and ranked, before its partial destruction by bombing in 1941, as the greatest museum of anatomy, pathology and physiology in the world. The library is accordingly very fully developed in these three scientific aspects of medicine, but is also well equipped in the clinical literature of surgery and the surgical specialities such as ophthalmology. It is particularly adapted to serve the needs of the postgraduate surgical student, and, with the development of postgraduate teaching now taking place in London, will increasingly serve this purpose. The college also has a choice historical library, which will be mentioned again later.

The London School of Hygiene's library has grown in twenty-five

years, under the fostering skill of Mr. Cyril C. Barnard, F.L.A., from small beginnings to be one of the most efficient large medical libraries in the country. Mr. Barnard worked out a special medical classification for the library, which has been adopted by several other English medical libraries.\* It is an admirably logical scheme of great practicability and fills a need not met by the medical classes of the general classifications. Mr. Barnard has lately published a history of the library, which records a growth of stock from less than 3,000 volumes in 1921 to more than 30,000 in 1946, and an average annual intake of 455 periodicals in the decade before the second world war. His history also describes a remarkable achievement in inter-library lending in which his library has lent nearly four times as many books as it has borrowed. The whole story is a record of public-spirited administration and deserves consideration by everyone interested in library organization. Mr. Barnard has also been active in teaching students how to use medical literature and libraries.

An efficient working library for the postgraduate student is that of the Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith with a good selection of research periodicals. The Universal Decimal Classification is in use here.

Students and qualified practitioners make much use of the old-established commercial lending library of Messrs. H. K. Lewis, the medical and scientific publishers and booksellers. This firm offers an unrivalled prompt library service, on subscription, of all current British and American scientific books, but not periodicals. It is considerably used also by institutional libraries for access to books which they need only temporarily. Printed catalogues are issued from time to time, the latest being complete to December, 1946, and supplemented by bi-monthly classified lists of accessions.

Two great libraries in London cater for qualified medical men throughout the country: the Royal Society of Medicine and the British Medical Association. Their services indeed extend through and beyond the British Isles. The Royal Society of Medicine seeks to serve the specialist, whether research-worker or clinician, in every branch of medicine. Primarily a private subscription lending library for the fellows of the society, it has always been liberal in allowing access to its rich resources by individual scientists or bibliographers, and has lately opened a free reference room for qualified medical visitors. Fellows of the Society are provided without charge

\* Barnard, C. C. *A classification for medical libraries*. Humphries. 1936.

with the library services familiar in American practice but little known here: lists of references, summary translations of articles in any European language, photostat or microfilm of books or articles which cannot be lent, and general reference information. Up to the present the Royal Society of Medicine has taken no part in library co-operation, but the establishment at its headquarters by the Rockefeller Foundation of a Central Medical Library Bureau may make it a leader, even if a late comer, in this field as in many others. It is the finest medical library in the Empire in size and scope of collections and in variety and extent of services. It has historical as well as modern collections, but has adhered to the policy of most British special libraries in not systematically collecting historical books. In the decade before the recent war it set itself the aim of collecting "all representative medical journals from every country" and is also strong in reference books and has an unmatched collection of medical serial books and Handbücher. The library is arranged by the Universal Decimal Classification. The general medical library of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society, which is the nucleus of this library, was considerably increased at the time of the amalgamation of societies by the excellent special libraries of the Obstetrical Society and the Odontological Society and has been considerably developed in all current aspects of medicine during the forty years since then.

The British Medical Association's library caters principally for the general practitioners of the country, for whom it provides a lending service of wide scope. Its development has been rapid in the past twenty years, and with the recent establishment by the Association of an elaborately organized abstracting service which will publish abstracts of the world's whole output of medical literature, taking the place of the various German series of Zentralblätter, the library will grow and develop its services even more widely and rapidly and promises to become the largest medical library of the country for current work especially with periodicals. It provides bibliographic services for members of the Association and takes part in library co-operation as an outlier of the National Central Library. Its collection of older periodicals though good does not compare with those of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Royal College of Surgeons. The only libraries ranking near them in this field are the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, the Manchester Medical Library and, of course, the British Museum.

The library of the Ministry of Health, which is very rich in the

literature of public health especially from the aspect of administration, is restricted entirely to the use of the Ministry's own staff and other government officials.

The British Council medical section has a modern library of wide scope. The section's main work is with the dissemination abroad of a knowledge of British medicine, but it also files a large number of foreign periodicals especially from Hispanic countries. Its publication, the *British medical bulletin*, regularly carries a library section of book reviews and historical and bibliographic essays of high standard.

Many research institutions, such as the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and several commercial firms, maintain libraries for their staffs. But the best research library is that of the Medical Research Council. This is located at the National Institute for Medical Research at Hampstead but serves the Council's numerous research units throughout the country. It is an extremely efficient library of nearly 20,000 volumes with a good range of scientific periodicals, and pursues a liberal policy of co-operation. It is unique among British medical libraries in having been organized and administered entirely by women librarians under Miss Baverstock and her successor, Miss Ethel Wigmore.

Among the more important special-society libraries are those of the Pharmaceutical Society, the British Dental Association, the British Psychological Society, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal Sanitary Institute, and the Central Library for animal diseases at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

#### HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

It has been a reproach to British special libraries as a whole that they have not exploited or developed their incomparable heritage of historical books, in spite of the excellent example set them by the British Museum and the inspiration of the Bibliographical Society's catalogues and monographs. Sir William Osler the great medical bibliophile, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, said that the medical libraries in London did not deserve gifts of historical books because they would not collect. There are signs that a new spirit is moving the authorities and that the coming years will show a wider recognition of the value of historical libraries as essential tools in the humane approach to medical education.

The wealth of the British Museum is unrivalled in the early books of medicine as of every other branch of knowledge, but these have naturally been studied there as examples of the printer's art, not as products of medical learning and discovery. The wealth of the Department of Manuscripts at the Museum has similarly not been explored from the medical aspect. With the opening to the public of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library, there will now be available in London an historical library of the first magnitude. This is the collection of the late Sir Henry Wellcome, F.R.S., head of the well-known firm of pharmaceutical manufacturers and a collector on a princely scale. Wellcome left his cultural collections—museum and library—to Trustees, for the public good, and adequately endowed them for maintenance and development. The aftermath of the war has prevented the Trustees from advertising the opening of the library, but a keen and scholarly staff has been got together, the books are available to serious students, exhibitions are being organized—in 1946 for the centenary of anaesthesia and in 1947 for the first post-war congress of the International Society of Surgery. Best of all, bibliographical books are being published and bibliographical catalogues prepared. As the library contains 700 fifteenth century medical books and the classics of later periods in proportion, as well as manuscripts, it will be realized how invaluable these catalogues will be, especially if as is hoped they may be produced on a co-operative basis to record the holdings of other British medical libraries. As became a merchant-prince of Wellcome's calibre, the condition of the books is superb.

It is peculiarly difficult to assess the relative wealth of libraries in classic books where no published catalogues exist, but by a collation of various special bibliographies it has been estimated that for every 20 medical books published before 1700 in the British Museum, the Royal College of Physicians of London may possess 12, the Royal Society of Medicine 10 and the Royal College of Surgeons 8. In this scale of relative wealth the Hunterian Library at Glasgow ought probably to be placed at about 15 and the Wellcome Library next to the British Museum. There are also splendid collections in Edinburgh and Dublin, at Aberdeen, Cambridge, Manchester and Oxford. Exhibitions of medical books have been held during the past year at Edinburgh University, at the Bodleian (printed catalogue, July 1947) and at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland for the bicentenary of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. The provisional



proportions above merely try to assess quantities, size of collections, and are no evidence of quality or of the presence of rarities in any particular library. Many of the smaller libraries undoubtedly possess rarities of interest, known only to a very limited circle. The libraries of a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century doctors survive intact and call for detailed study. This sketch emphasizes one need which the projected Wellcome catalogues will fill.

Outstanding among the libraries of historic interest in London is the Royal College of Physicians Library. It is now almost entirely devoted to medical history. The College of Physicians formed a fine library in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which was totally destroyed in the great fire in 1666, the college being then and long after in the city. It received great accessions through a bequest from Lord Dorchester in 1680 and owns many notable books beyond its medical collection. Among its manuscripts are two English illuminated Psalters, a Chaucer and the Padua doctor's diploma of William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who was a prominent benefactor of the college. The printed books include the only recorded copy of the first book on dancing with printed music, Paris about 1488, reproduced in facsimile for the college by Dr. Victor Scholderer in 1936. A catalogue of the library compiled by Mr. H. M. Barlow was published in 1912, which is still a useful work of reference, but the library was considerably strengthened within the following decade by the bequest of early books from Dr. David Lloyd Roberts.

The historical collections at the Royal College of Surgeons were built up under the care of Robert Willis, M.D., librarian a hundred years ago and an authority on sixteenth and seventeenth century medicine and philosophy. They have lately been re-organized. They are representative of medicine in general with particular emphasis on anatomy and surgery. The college also possesses the papers of John Hunter and of Lister, the pioneer of antiseptic surgery. The Society of Apothecaries owns a small but comprehensive series of herbals, and the Medical Society of London a library of 20,000 volumes which is rich in seventeenth and eighteenth century books. The collection of manuscripts, catalogued by Warren R. Dawson in 1932, is remarkable for a series of late Greek medical texts which were worked over by Charles Daremberg a century ago.

The London School of Hygiene possesses an important aggregation of books and pamphlets illustrating the history of smallpox,

variola and vaccination, the nucleus of which was formed by Dr. R. J. Reece. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists owns the books in its special field collected by Dr. Roy Dobbin of Cairo, a choice group in beautiful condition. The medical schools have collections of the works of their alumni, of which the most notable are those of Guy's and St. Bartholomew's.

Historical-medical studies and bibliography have for the most part been left to practising medical men in this country, who have of course drawn on the resources of the institutional libraries. The work as bibliophiles or bibliographers of Hans Sloane, Richard Mead, Anthony Askew, William Hunter, J. F. Payne, John Ferguson, William Osler, D'Arcy Power, is worthily carried on by Charles Singer, Geoffrey Keynes, Douglas Guthrie. British medical librarians have usually been too much occupied with the daily running of their libraries for more than the transient aspect of bibliography represented by current reference work. But the thorough and indispensable *Medical bibliography* by Leslie Morton is a worthy representative of the kind of work which libraries and librarians ought to produce if their collections are to be kept alive and educative. The indexing of current medical literature is well provided for by the indexes issued from the Army Medical Library at Washington and the American Medical Association at Chicago.

#### CO-ORDINATION AND SERVICES

Perhaps the weakest point of the medical libraries in London is their lack of co-ordination for purposes of book acquisition, as well as for service to the profession. The latter aspect will no doubt be less piecemeal when the Central Medical Library Bureau at the Royal Society of Medicine begins to act as a clearing house for inter-library information. It has not proved possible, though attempts have been made repeatedly during the last twenty years, to secure agreement in specializing the acquisition programmes of the various medical libraries so as to avoid uneconomic duplication and a wider general intake. The beginnings of such an arrangement have been agreed between the London School of Hygiene, the Medical Research Council, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Thane Library at University College. A union catalogue of current periodicals in these four libraries and that of the British Medical Association has been compiled, and a copy on cards is available in each of the co-operating libraries and in the National Central Library, thanks

to provision by the Medical Research Council. The Central Medical Library Bureau is also compiling a union catalogue of periodicals in all British medical libraries; but this will probably be a single office copy. The holdings of the more important medical libraries are recorded in the *World list*, 1934, and of those connected with university libraries in the *Union catalogue of periodicals*, 1937. But no co-ordination or joint recording of book collections has been attempted yet. The survey of research libraries projected by the Library Association ought to throw a useful light on this problem. The purchase of foreign books by medical libraries is unorganized, if one may judge by the frequent difficulty of finding a wanted foreign book in any British library. Similarly no single library specializes in medico-legal literature. No doubt most medico-legal books could be traced by searching all the medical and legal libraries of London and Edinburgh, but a co-operative catalogue of medico-legal books and periodicals might disclose unfortunate lacunae and pave the way for a co-ordinating policy. This is but one example of the problems that face medical librarians. A Medical Section of the Library Association has recently been formed. This will provide a meeting place to devise solutions for problems such as these.

#### SUMMARY

This short survey of London's medical libraries points out their great but scattered resources, and the general efficiency but lack of co-ordination in their services. It calls attention to the need for better undergraduate libraries, and for instruction in the use of them. Further scholarly exploitation of their historical collections and a drawing together of their librarians for mutual aid are likely developments of the near future.

## CHAPTER XV

# THE GUILDHALL LIBRARY

By RAYMOND SMITH, F.S.A., F.L.A., *Librarian*

I should like, in the first place, to express my thanks for this opportunity of making more widely known the history and activities of the Guildhall Library. We have a definite and unique, if rather circumscribed, contribution to make to librarianship in general, and to the metropolitan area in particular: and I hope it will be of some use to students and others, to know what we are, what we do, and what we want to do.

I am going to begin rather a long way back. It is a truism to say that the present is conditioned by the past. I make no apology for basing my talk on this truism, having plenty of faith in the development of the new from the old, and little in the *tabula rasa*, the doctrinaire, the blueprint, and all forms of planning in the abstract. Guildhall Library has developed along quite peculiar lines, and its structure and growth are due to the changing society in which it has been set. Even today we take as our inspiration the ideas and ideals of the people who founded it in the fifteenth century, and fostered its growth thereafter. Even today we claim, and I think justly claim, that we are striving to carry out policies and purposes which derive from a remote past: the leaves of the tree are green, the trunk is knotted and gnarled, and the roots very far down.

I cannot, in strict truth, refer to the origins of the library in the singular, since it has had two, and an interval of nearly 400 years separates them in time. How the two growths stemming from these roots have coalesced and grown together will be the first part of my story.

In 1423 that rich and pious merchant Richard Whittington died. In his will he left money for charitable purposes: and his executors, with the executors of one William Bury, set up the first Guildhall Library. Contemporary records tell us very little about the collection thus inaugurated; but it is known that the main purpose of it was for the use of students, and those engaged in instructing the

people : and we also know, what is of equal importance, that it was described by contemporaries as *Libraria communis*, the common library, at Guildhall. That it was mainly theological in character is a fair guess. Indeed the only surviving relic of it which we possess—acquired some years ago from an antiquarian book-dealer—is a metrical version of the Bible by Peter de Riga.

This library endured for some 125 years : and then, probably in 1549, the whole collection was "borrowed" in its entirety by the Duke of Somerset, possibly for the purpose of furnishing his new palace, Somerset House in the Strand. It is believed that the Corporation was not the only owner whose treasures were confiscated in this arbitrary way for the same purpose.

It may be assumed that the Corporation were dismayed by this calamity ; it does not appear that they made any effort to recover their lost treasures, and certainly they made no effort to establish another library at Guildhall for nearly 300 years.

Not until the early nineteenth century was any attempt made to get together another library—the early nineteenth century which saw the inception of the modern spirit of historical inquiry, and the beginning of the publications of the Record Commission.

In 1824 the Corporation appointed a committee to "inquire into the best method of arranging and carrying into effect in the Guildhall, a library of all matters relating to this City, the Borough of Southwark, and the County of Middlesex".

I would like to emphasize the exact terms of reference. The library was to be highly specialized, devoted to "all matters relating to" a given geographical area. The precise implication of this will be more fully realized when the history and pre-history of the city is considered : the Celtic settlement ; the Roman occupation and desertion ; the medieval city, rich in political and economic power ; the guilds ; the struggle for independence and self-government ; the arrest of the five members ; the Plague, the Fire ; the growth of a greater London ; the struggle between court and city in the eighteenth century, the dominance of the city in the economic life of the country in the nineteenth century ; all these are "matters relating to this City".

I would further make the point that this library was founded and maintained by the Corporation out of its Privy Purse, and not by the ratepayers. And although it was for many years a private library open only to members of the Corporation and accredited students, in

1873, when the present building was completed, it was opened to the public. Thus it became—and I think it still is today—the only public library solely for reference maintained by a local authority. To this point I will return later: but first I want to deal with the growth of the library and the gradual development of its policy.

In 1850 the first Library Act was passed. It is difficult for us today, surrounded as we are by public and private libraries of every description, to realize the position of the poor student in London in that year. Then, apart from the British Museum, there were no public libraries in the metropolis. A hundred years earlier a plea had been issued for a "public mercantile library" in the city. Gibbon, half a century earlier, had deplored that "the greatest city in the world is destitute of a public library". But in 1850 Charles Knight could say, "I, who carry on my vocation in London, who have been in London five-and-twenty years, I say with shame . . . that there is not a single library, from Whitechapel to Hyde Park Corner . . . from Lambeth or Southwark to Marylebone, or in any other part, where a poor man can walk into a public library and obtain without purchase, or without hire, a single volume for his consolation."

In 1857 the City of Westminster adopted the Library Acts, but thirty to forty years passed before London possessed, generally speaking, the provision that had been made years before by Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. It is true that in 1853 the Library Committee of the Corporation reported in favour of establishing a free library and free circulating library, but a public meeting called in 1855 by the Lord Mayor rejected the suggestion. Ratepayers would have none of it.

Meanwhile the small library formed by the Corporation in 1824-8 was growing in size and in importance, and while the chief emphasis was still on London books, many works were added illustrative of London's growth or necessary to a library of any size. Reports made in 1832 and 1835 show that works on English history and topography had been acquired on a large scale, "together with lectures on the Constitution, parliamentary works, and a collection of dictionaries, glossaries, etc., so important in every public library".

During the next thirty-five\* years the collection had expanded steadily. In 1869-72 the present library was built, and the Common Council resolved that its books and library treasures "should henceforth be devoted to the free use of the public".



The next important step in library development in this country was the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1892 to which I have already referred. I want to stress the point that until the passing of this act Guildhall was, with the exception of Westminster, the only municipal reference library of any size in London. This factor, and the other factor that Guildhall was solely and wholly a reference library, gave it a unique position. It is obvious that by sheer force of circumstances the scope of its intake had to be widened; and Guildhall by reason of the number and variety of the calls made on it, became not merely a local collection with a general background, but—what was in those days—a large library of general reference.

From the 1890s onwards, however, the public library position in London began to change; slowly at first, but with increasing acceleration. The poverty-stricken Carnegie and Borough Libraries of the early days developed prodigiously; the Library Association was formed and instituted professional examinations, and the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1919 removed the 1d. rate limitation which had been such a terrible handicap to library development. This meant that some of the work formerly done by Guildhall was being done—on a smaller scale perhaps, but nevertheless being done—in twenty-eight other metropolitan centres. Guildhall no longer stood alone: it was one of a number; though even today I venture to think it is in some respect *primus inter pares*.

Events in the greater world outside were not without repercussions even in the small sphere of the city's library. The war of 1914-18 affected very badly the city's private purse, and in 1922 the city, which had for nearly 100 years maintained a quasi-public and public service at no public cost, adopted the Libraries Act with effect from 1921, and the library became rate-supported. World War No. II was, for us, a major tragedy. On the night of 29th-30th December, 1940, Guildhall was set on fire from sparks which spread from a neighbouring church, and part of the library was burned out; while many thousands of volumes were damaged by fire, water and subsequently, ice. I do not propose to enter into detail of this loss; I will merely say that if we could have had a select fire we would have welcomed it; we lost much valuable material, but much lumber too. And we determined to turn our tragedy into victory, by seizing the opportunity for overhauling our remaining stocks, and by re-constituting from the ground upwards on the lines of a declared policy. This briefly was as follows: to retain all materials relative to London;

but as a merely local collection is not adequate to interpret London's history, to supplement it by a reference library illustrative of the historical and cultural background of London's development; in especial, by our comprehensive collections of English county and local history, topography and genealogy. It was agreed also to maintain and develop, for the business world, the collection of trade and local directories, both home and foreign, statistical and economic annuals and year books, and a number of commercial and legal works useful to a trading community; and on these bases to build up a selective and generally representative collection of basic reference books, and books not easily obtainable elsewhere, in all classes of literature.

So much then for the history of the library and the development of its policy. As will be appreciated, Guildhall is unique; it fits into no category; it is a public municipal library with no loan facilities to its residents or to people who work in its area: it is a special library with a background of general reference works or conversely a general reference library built round a highly important nucleus of local and specialized material; it is part privately, and part publicly owned; its building and private collections are leased to the library authority; and it serves an area with a day population estimated at 350,000 and a night population of 6,000 or 7,000.

I would like, at this point, to give a few details of the contents of the library. As I have already indicated, it is a general reference library built round our special London collection. This latter comprises three sections, namely printed material, manuscripts, and prints, and covers roughly the area of the county of London, with special emphasis on the city. The printed material includes items on all aspects of London life and history, and is the most comprehensive collection on London available anywhere. The set of London directories running from 1677 to date is of particular note.

The manuscript collection consists, for the most part, of items relating to the square mile of the city, and is particularly strong in parochial and city livery companies' records, many of which have been deposited by the authorities concerned.

The print collection is second only in size and interest to that in the British Museum, and includes the superb Wakefield collection of prints and drawings.

The general reference library provides standard works on all subjects (other than technical) and has long files going back into the late eighteenth century of such material as newspapers, parliamentary

papers and debates, law reports, and public and local acts. It also contains complete files of the *London gazette* from 1665, and *The Times* from 1805. It has very extensive collections on bibliography, English history, topography, archaeology and genealogy, including files of directories for English towns and counties, poll books, printed parish registers, and the publications of learned societies, and the Public Record Office.

The commercial side of the library provides current national, provincial and foreign newspapers, trade periodicals, local, county, foreign and trade directories, statistical and commercial handbooks, and works of reference on commercial and legal subjects.

Altogether the library comprises some 130,000 printed volumes and 10,000 manuscripts. In addition, it houses thousands of pamphlets, hundreds of broadsides and proclamations, and thousands of playbills. I must, however, qualify the figure of 130,000 by saying that owing to destruction of storage by enemy action we house, at the moment, only about 50,000 volumes, while 80,000 remain in store. In addition, we house a number of small special collections, such as the library of the Clockmakers' Company, the Gardeners' Company, and the Cock Collection relating to Sir Thomas More (formerly an undersheriff of the city).

Our public is roughly of three classes: the worker in fields of London history and topography; the reader, untrained or trained, who is in search of a particular piece of information in any field; and the business man who wants directories, or statistical or other information in commercial fields.

I may add that though our basic stock is reference only, we have recently instituted, and are daily adding to, a duplicated collection of London books from which we lend to other libraries and occasionally to private individuals. This policy was projected before the preparation of the proposals for post-war development issued by the University and Research Section of the Library Association. That report included two paragraphs (20 and 41) stressing the importance of local collections and suggesting that in addition to maintaining them on a reference basis, a duplicate collection should also be made available for lending. These paragraphs strengthened our hands and expedited our progress in this direction very considerably. I am not sure that we are pioneers in this especial regard—I mean in the formation of a duplicate local collection available for loan—but I have not to date heard of any other.

Our place in the metropolitan system is that we are not only a general reference library, but also the centre of a group of neighbouring borough libraries referring to us—theoretically at any rate, and to some extent practically—queries which they themselves cannot answer. The use of the library as a clearing house for unanswered queries has been established for some time: not it is true on an official basis, but dependent largely on the zeal and enthusiasm at local centres. We take part in the activities of the reference group of the London and Home Counties branch of the Library Association, and Guildhall is one of the five housing libraries in London for the Reference Group's index of annuals and directories taken by London municipal libraries.

We have also a special interest as the only public library collecting London literature on any scale; our unique position in this respect is clearly recognized by the McColvin report, which (p. 149) gives us status among the projected regional services as a comprehensive library of London history, topography and social life. We fully appreciate that we do not and cannot stand in isolation: we have a duty to the city, to the boroughs, and to the library system of the country. We co-operate in every way we can, and develop our service along our own individual lines—as I hope to show later on—and by this means make our own special contribution to the metropolitan area and to the service in general. But as London is a city not merely of local, county or even national interest, it will be clear that our status, service and outlook is not merely metropolitan. We may claim to be national in a sense that no other library in the country is.

And now, what of the future? Well, in the first place our immediate problems are three: rebuilding, reconstitution and recataloguing. As has been already implied, our storage space has been reduced by well over 50 per cent. Plans have been prepared and estimates accepted for a certain amount of temporary storage construction and shelving, but these are held up by the universal shortage of labour and material, and I fear it will be years before we have reassembled all our collections. In the second place we are reconstituting our book collections and every book is being examined to see whether or not it fits into our policy. Thirdly, we have decided, owing to our proportionately large losses—25 to 30 per cent of the total pre-war stock—and other causes, to recatalogue and reclassify every book.

And our future policy and activities? Firstly to develop our reference service along the lines which our long experience in reference work has taught us to be best. Here perhaps I may for the moment be forgiven if I digress a little. We don't ignore gadgets—we have our own photostat, for example, and our own record systems, and we certainly shall not ignore the photo-mechanical processes of the future. But we believe firmly in the personal element—that the successful working and exploitation of the library depends on the personal qualities of the librarian and his professional staff. We have founded no school, our professional staff is small; we are perhaps not very well known outside the confines of the metropolis. But with the library has grown, I am proud to think, a tradition of public service that has not been without influence, and an influence that will, I hope, grow. We are unique in having a highly trained and efficient staff given wholly to reference and bibliographical work: we believe that a small stock thoroughly known and exploited is better than masses of unused and unknown material: we try to learn the technique of assistance—how to be polite without fussiness, to know how far to help, how far to abstain. We try to teach contact with readers as well as with books, if our readers want us as friends or advisers—I repeat, if they want us as friends or advisers—we are prepared to help them. We try to see that every one who comes to us gets individual attention, and personal help as far as he wants it, and we think it our first duty to give it to him.

Second: our ideas of service are rather coloured by our function and position. For instance; though we do not deprecate publicity, or advertisement, our readers are people who want information and come to us for it, and we are at the moment satisfied with this position. I may add that under present conditions we are more or less forced to accept it, for each reader has to be given individual attention, since he can no longer rely on catalogues alone. The time we spend with readers is time abstracted from reconstruction work, and a balance has to be struck between the two demands. These circumstances cause us to give consideration to the provision of some sort of tuition in schools, so that senior scholars at least may be told what the library contains, and more important, how to set about using it for themselves and by themselves. There are very few adults who can use a library without guidance.

Third, we also think it is of the first importance that every inquiry

is adequately answered ; and for that purpose it is essential for us, if we cannot supply information needed, to know who can. This is leading us to establish contact with special libraries, in the city in particular, so that we may be able to cover the widest possible field.

Fourth, not only our service but our stock depends upon our neighbouring libraries. It is idle for us to build up extensive reference collections in the economic, scientific, technical and artistic fields when we have the London School of Economics, the Patent Office, Science Museum, Natural History Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum on our doorstep, more or less.

Fifth, we co-operate to the fullest extent we can with other libraries. We have already established a central consultative committee consisting of representatives of our own library and those of the three endowed institutes in the city—which, parenthetically, have lending library facilities. And, we are collaborating with all the London borough libraries in a recently instituted scheme for stock specialization which seeks to ensure that all subjects in the whole field of knowledge will be adequately represented in lending library stocks. I might add here that we have contributed since its inception to the maintenance of the London Union Catalogue, which comprises—or will comprise—all the non-fiction works in the London borough libraries and our own ; and though we have no lending facilities, do lend to other libraries and are an outlier of the National Central Library.

Sixth, we consider it our function to further the claims of reference work and to help reference service in every way.

Finally, though we are precluded by the peculiarities of our position and function from the cultural activities of most public libraries, we do however co-operate to an extent, by means of loans of books, pictures and museum objects, with schools and hospitals of the Corporation. These activities and others we hope to extend or begin in the future, when we are on our feet again. But for the time being it will be clear that we have our hands full with the work of restoration and re-establishment. We are fortunate, however, in having the wholehearted support of a committee and of a Corporation which is very proud of its library and of the service it renders to the citizens of London ; and whatever may be the development of libraries and library service, we look forward to the future from the ruins of the past, with hope and confidence.



## CHAPTER XVI

# THE LONDON BOROUGH LIBRARIES

By JAMES D. STEWART, M.B.E., F.L.A.

*Borough Librarian of Bermondsey, London*

To get a clear idea of the municipal public libraries of Metropolitan London, it is advisable to take a brief glance at their origin and history.

In the middle of the last century when the first Public Libraries Act was in operation, Metropolitan London was divided up into sixty-seven parishes, each one of which could become a separate Library Authority. The honour of being the first London area to adopt the Act is held by the parish of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster, which took this then momentous step in 1856. Just over a quarter of a century—twenty-seven years to be exact—elapsed before Wandsworth followed this example, with Fulham three years later in 1886.

This long interval was not actually barren, because a great deal of unobtrusive work was done in the education of opinion regarding the need for the public provision of books. That this spade work had its effect is shown by the fact that in 1887, when the first edition of Greenwood's *Public libraries* appeared, eight areas adopted the Act. These areas were Battersea, Bermondsey, Chelsea, Finsbury, Hammersmith, Kensington, Lambeth and the remainder of Westminster.

In 1890 an amending Act came into force and gave further stimulus, resulting in nine areas adopting the Acts between 1890 and 1895. At the end of the century twenty-two of the Metropolitan areas had library services.

In 1900 a London Government Act had the important and far-reaching effect of amalgamating the sixty-seven parishes into the present system of twenty-nine areas comprising the Cities of London and Westminster, and the Metropolitan Boroughs. This not only brought together the appropriate adjoining local parishes into more convenient units, but also had the effect of promoting the adoption,

between 1901 and 1920, of the Public Libraries Acts for the remaining London Boroughs. Their adoption by Paddington and St. Marylebone in 1920 completed the process for the whole of the Metropolitan area.

The administrative framework for the Metropolitan municipal public library service is now as follows. There are twenty-nine independent library authorities, each providing a more or less complete service within their areas. Each of these systems consists of a central library surrounded by satellite branch libraries. The only variation from this is in the case of the City of London which, so far, has confined its provision to the large reference library at Guildhall and has left the setting up of local lending libraries to the semi-private City Institutes, such as those at Bishopsgate and St. Bride's.

A great deal of argument, during which a great deal of uninformed nonsense has been talked, has gone on for many years regarding whether or not this is the right administrative framework for the library service of the Metropolis. At first sight this assemblage of twenty-nine independent library authorities would appear to be a cumbersome method of providing a service that should be more or less uniform over the entire area, and this gives a deceptive plausibility to the suggestion that there should be one central authority for library purposes. This question of centralized versus local administration has been so much to the fore in recent years that it may be as well to devote a few minutes to its practical effects so far as library services are concerned.

It must be remembered that London presents a library problem quite distinct from that of any other part of the United Kingdom. This distinction arises largely from the fact that London, as the capital, contains in addition to its municipal libraries, the immense national library resources of the British Museum, the National Science Library, the Library of the Patent Office, etc., and the vast semi-private, but usually available, resources of numerous specialized organizations having their headquarters in London. So far as reference library provision is concerned, therefore, it is probable that nowhere else in the world is the advanced student and research worker so well provided for as he is in the London area. In most other large cities, for example, in Birmingham, Manchester and New York, the municipal public library has to take the place, so far as it can, of the great national reference libraries; but in London the

situation is obviously quite different. This, while it eases the situation, does not absolve the London Boroughs from providing good reference libraries, and later on I will outline briefly their present state and our future hopes.

The circumstance that there are few comparable library areas anywhere else in the world makes a contrasting examination of the results of centralized and local control very difficult; but in those areas where a single authority controls a very large system, the following divergencies from the London situation exist. There is usually a large "central" library which is much more complete and extensive than any municipal library existing in London today. Within its limits, which are chiefly those imposed by accessibility and transport, this kind of central library provides, for the centre of the area, a service far beyond that provided by any municipal library in London. The remainder of the area is covered by branch libraries of varying sizes. These branch libraries cannot, as a general rule, bear comparison with the local central libraries of the London Boroughs, and do not provide anything so good as the service given in the Boroughs all around and outside the central area.

The position, therefore, is that while London lacks the superlative *central* municipal library service given in the few comparable areas, the level of the service given over the whole area, and especially in those parts at a distance from the centre, is very much higher in London than it is anywhere else. In other words, the library "coverage" given throughout all parts of the Metropolitan area is undoubtedly better as it stands than anything that would have resulted from a centralized control.

As a London Borough librarian I may possibly be accused of prejudice, but I have been sufficiently long in the service to take a detached view of this problem. I have seen large library systems in operation in this and in other countries, and I am convinced that the ordinary resident in Metropolitan London, including the man living on the outskirts as well as the man living at the centre, has at his immediate disposal a far better library service, for ordinary purposes, than exists anywhere else. It is interesting to note that Mr. McColvin, who certainly cannot be accused of local prejudice, and who has just completed a survey of the library services in many other countries, agrees entirely with this view.

Further, my experience, in other capacities, of large centralized organizations has convinced me that local control results in greater

attention being given to special local needs, and provides much greater opportunities for personal initiative and experiment.

And lastly, it must be realized that the average Metropolitan Borough has resources which enable it to provide a library service at least comparable with that of most of the large provincial towns. It may surprise most people to know that two adjoining London Boroughs are between them providing more money for the purchase of books this year than is provided by the largest provincial city in the country.

I make no apology for introducing these theoretical considerations into what is intended mainly as a statement of facts, because they have a considerable bearing on the more recent developments of London's public library service with which I am mainly concerned. And I may even hope to persuade you that local control combined with a larger-area co-operation is an excellent method of making the best of both worlds.

A brief summary of the present condition and work of the London Borough libraries is advisable at this point. The present estimated population of Metropolitan London is about 3,200,000. To serve this there are 124 public library buildings containing a stock of about 4,000,000 volumes. The administrative and clerical staff numbers 1,020 with 228 manual workers, making a total of 1,248. The total number of books issued during last year was 25,555,569, which was an increase of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions over the previous year. The total expenditure was £672,416. If you care to compare these figures with those of any other library area in the world, you will realize that London's library organization, though it may not be ideal, more than stands up to any comparative analysis.

My real purpose, however, is not to hold London up either as a good or a bad example of administrative control, but to describe some of the influences and processes that have been at work in recent years to turn this assemblage of independent libraries into one closely-knit system by means of mutual understanding and co-operative effort. First, however, let me admit that Metropolitan London is most favourably placed for the kind of inter-library co-operation I am going to describe. Its units (i.e. the London Boroughs) are all within reasonable distance of one another and are more or less comparable in size and resources. This means that each Borough can be expected to take an equal share in any enterprise. This is an important factor, because the situation in most areas of the country is that one or more

very large libraries are surrounded by numbers of very small libraries, which naturally makes inter-library co-operation and the financing of special schemes difficult to adjust, and throws most of the burden on a few of the participating libraries.

Another special feature in which Metropolitan London differs, I believe, from every other part of the country, is that it has an active Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee, which exists for the purpose of advising the Metropolitan Boroughs on any matters that concern London as a whole. This Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee, consisting of representatives from each authority, has within its organization an Advisory Body of Librarians, to which it refers for consideration any matters affecting the Metropolitan public libraries. There is also in London an Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians, which meets monthly for the practical discussion of library affairs; and any matter for which such a course seems appropriate can be referred by this Association through the Advisory Body (which it elects from its own membership) to the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee. The unusual advantages of such an arrangement are clear; any development of library practice which secures the approval of the Metropolitan Chief Librarians can be taken direct to the Standing Joint Committee representing all the library authorities in the area; and, if it appears to be desirable, is then recommended to the individual library authorities. I should say that the Standing Joint Committee has no power to enforce any course of action upon any of its constituent authorities, but if a majority of the latter approve any particular scheme, it is usually only a matter of time before all fall into line.

The circumstance that has brought about this change in the relations between the library authorities of London was the formation in 1929 of the London Union Catalogue. This is, in effect, the Regional Library Bureau for the Metropolitan area, and it was financed during its first few years by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. In 1934, when it became necessary to transfer the financial responsibility for the London Union Catalogue from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust to the constituent libraries, the obvious body to take control was the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee; and that body has controlled the organization, through its Advisory Body of Librarians (first elected for this special purpose) since that date. I believe the London regional system is the only

one in the country which is controlled by such a semi-statutory body.

Incidentally, the creation of the London Union Catalogue organization, with its extensive inter-library lending scheme, was also the first real step forward towards the linking up of the independent library systems in the area. As is now the case in all regional systems, it then first became possible for a reader at any one of the 124 library buildings in the Metropolitan area to have at his command the total non-fiction stock of all the Metropolitan libraries. How important a step forward this was is not always fully realized today ; but it is only necessary to think back to the 1920s when the reader was, in most cases, limited to the few thousand books that happened to be in the library building he visited, and to compare this with his present more fortunate state in having about 2,000,000 books available immediately and about 20,000,000 further books available through the National Central Library, to realize that it was indeed a very long step.

This went some distance towards removing the old and well-founded complaint that public library service in London was very largely decided by place of residence, and that the man on one side of the street might have at his disposal a much better service than the man who happened to live on the other side of the street.

During the early days of the war, the opportunity was taken to bring about another reform through the medium of the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee with the agreement of the Boroughs. This was a scheme for the inter-availability of readers' tickets, whereby a reader registered at any of the Metropolitan Boroughs can use his ticket anywhere in the Metropolitan area, with the sole remaining exception of Chelsea. This scheme, originally intended to overcome the difficulties experienced by readers during the London blitz, when large movements of population took place and large numbers of workers were diverted to unaccustomed districts, has proved so useful and well-appreciated that it has now become an ordinary feature of London's library work. How much it is appreciated is shown by the fact that during the last year the number of books borrowed by readers using their tickets outside their home areas was over 360,000. Is it too much to hope that one day this principle will be extended to cover the whole country?

A development such as this brings many minor problems in its train, and one of these was the appearance in the library issue-trays



of readers' tickets of various shapes and sizes. This prompted the Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians to consider the standardization of such forms as readers' tickets, bookcards, etc. ; and, at a later date, various other forms in common use in libraries, particularly those used for inter-library communications of one kind or another. Although difficulties of material have hampered the complete carrying out of these recommendations, a good deal of progress has been made.

It is worth noting, at this point, that so far as details of library administration are concerned, decisions taken by the Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians become effective without reference to any other body.

Experience gained from the use of the London Union Catalogue and its inter-library loans has more recently concentrated attention on library book-stocks, and two main developments that have taken place are of considerable interest. For a long time the London Union Catalogue office has been useful, not only in suggesting better provision of certain books, but also in preventing the complete disappearance from the London area of many of the older books. While this kind of advice, based on current usage, was and is valuable, it was felt to be insufficient as regards library stocks in general, and the first organized attempt to solve this problem on a larger scale was the creation of a London Joint Fiction Reserve. It had been found, especially since the war years, when so many books were destroyed, that many works of fiction (including books for children) had become difficult to obtain, if they were not in danger of total disappearance. The Joint Fiction Reserve was established for the purpose of ensuring that somewhere in the London area copies of all works of fiction likely to be required by the student of literature, or by the reader having some definite purpose, would be available. The method adopted has been to allocate a small part of the alphabet to each of the London Boroughs, and to make them responsible for the books written by authors whose names come within these alphabetical limits. Thus Battersea is responsible for all fictional authors from A to BAI, Hammersmith for all between FR and GN, and so forth. Each library is expected to make a deliberate effort to collect books within these limits, and is assisted in this by all the other libraries contributing appropriate books as they are withdrawn from current circulation.

This scheme came into operation on 1st May, 1946, and already

considerable stocks of standard and older works of fiction have been built up ; and it is satisfactory to note that considerable use has been made of them. Those of you who are familiar with Union Catalogues will know that works of fiction are not usually represented in such compilations. This is the case in London, so that the method of working the scheme has been simplified by supplying each library with an alphabetical and Borough key to the collections, and all requests are made direct to the holding libraries, either by post or telephone.

The second plan for improving the stocks of books available in the London area is much wider and more far-reaching, and consists of the introduction of a scheme whereby each library in the area specializes in certain subjects. Wherever there are a number of independent libraries in an area, it is obvious that each of these must be a "general" library attempting to represent all subjects and all kinds of books. The result of this is that each library naturally limits its purchases to the best and most commonly-needed books in each field of literature and makes no attempt, apart from certain local interests, to represent particular subjects with completeness and adequacy. From this it follows that while each Borough in London might have a reasonable selection of books on a special subject, duplicating neighbouring selections to a considerable extent, London as a whole would be without any really specialized collection such as would be needed by the advanced student and research worker.

In order to overcome this defect the whole field of knowledge has been divided into appropriate sections and allocated by agreement to the Boroughs. Each authority has agreed to make additional financial provision for this scheme, and in the course of time valuable special collections on all subjects will be built up over the area.

It is important to realize that the creation of these specialized collections is *in addition* to the book provision which has existed heretofore ; and also that the scheme is a long-term one, enabling each library to build up these specialized collections as circumstances, including accommodation, will allow. It is expected that in this way each Borough library will come to possess a departmental library in its own special subject, with all the resources of a similar department in a well equipped university library ; and it is obvious that even in the meantime this additional provision will bring about a gradual but most valuable expansion of the resources available. These specialized collections will include both reference and lending

material, and will be available, partly through the inter-library lending scheme, to all readers in the London area.

A great many other matters concerning London library administration and methods might receive attention, but I can do no more than indicate a few of them here. The question of reference library provision is one of these. As already indicated, the great national reference libraries in London make an incomparable provision for the advanced student and research worker, although difficulties arising from lack of accommodation and time spent on travelling limit the general usefulness of these institutions. At the other end of the scale, the reference libraries contained at present in the Borough libraries are mainly equipped, and fairly well equipped, for the less advanced and elementary student; but they cannot be considered adequate. There is an obvious need therefore for one or two much larger reference libraries to be provided by the municipalities, and various proposals to effect this are under consideration. In the meantime it is worth noting that the City of Westminster is now engaged in creating an extended reference library of this nature, and that this, together with the Guildhall Library, will do much to improve the situation. And, of course, the scheme of specialization already outlined will give great help in time.

Suggestions are also being considered for the establishment of special commercial reference libraries at appropriate focal points in the area.

Owing to the rapid and unequal growth of population the geographical distribution of library services has become important. The Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians has prepared a map of the Metropolitan area showing in detail the library buildings that exist at present, those projected by the various authorities, and those others which the Association recommends should be built to cover the area properly. This map will be reproduced in quantity shortly, and should have the effect of so spacing library provision throughout the area that every inhabitant will find a library building conveniently placed and easy of access. In some cases joint schemes between adjoining authorities may be necessary.

A good deal of work has also been done on such details as bringing about uniformity in the hours during which library services are available, and in the standardization of other rules and regulations affecting the public use of the libraries.

A number of other co-operative developments of the work of the

London libraries have been the subject of reports and detailed consideration, but have been delayed by the political considerations and uncertainties regarding the possible new administrative areas into which the Metropolis may or may not be divided. These must remain in the background for the present, but I hope that I have been able to give you sufficient details for a picture, even if only an outline one, of the Metropolitan public library service as it exists at the present moment. I hope, too, that I have made it clear that it is possible for a number of quite independent authorities and administrators to work together for area as well as local purposes, and to become a co-ordinated body for the service of the public.

I believe that the methods and ideas I have described might with great advantage be considered in other areas of our country where any convenient geographical assemblage of libraries—even if only a few—makes them possible and useful. Even in these days of increasing compulsion and regimentation, I believe there are still great opportunities for the friendly voluntary co-operation that results in mutual helpfulness and the improvement of the public service.

## CHAPTER XVII

# THE NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY

By S. P. L. FILON, B.Sc., F.L.A., *Deputy Librarian*

In his book on *Library co-operation in Europe* (1935), Mr. J. H. P. Pafford pointed out that Great Britain is the only country which, while possessing a considerable library service, has no state-supported lending service. This state of affairs, however, has not prevented us from developing, in the course of the last thirty years, one of the most highly organized national lending services in existence.

The need for a national lending service, as apart from local services, was felt for some considerable time before the existence of the National Central Library, or even of its forerunner the Central Library for Students. For instance, one of the earliest of the numerous suggestions foreshadowing the creation of the Central Library for Students was made at the L.A. Conference of 1906 by J. McKillop who suggested that the L.C.C. Education Committee should establish a central library for the provision of expensive books for students. The idea of "store" or "central" libraries to supplement the public library service by providing the more expensive and out of the way books was put forward by S. Kirby in the same year. A. J. Philip of Gravesend, who was responsible for inaugurating the first interlending system in London, proposed the establishment of a Central Reference Library and Clearing House for London and in 1913 the suggestion made by a group of librarians that a central loan library should be created was warmly supported by Dr. A. W. Pollard, the future Hon. Librarian of the Central Library for Students. Dr. Pollard further advocated a petition for a grant from the Board of Education.\*

War, however, came in 1914 and prevented any of these suggestions being put into practice. It is indeed a curious fact, commented

\* For fuller summaries of these papers and bibliographical references see L. Newcombe, *Library co-operation in the British Isles*, Chap. 2.

upon by Mr. Pafford, that the seed from which was to spring the National Central Library and our present national interlending system was sown not by librarians but by those concerned with popular education. The Central Library for Students was founded in 1916 by Dr. Albert Mansbridge and a group of persons interested in adult education. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust agreed to make a grant for the purpose of establishing the new library and of covering expenses during an initial experimental period of five years.

The purpose of the Central Library, as defined in its first annual report, was "to ensure that all *bona fide* students coming under its notice shall be helped in their studies, if they are unable to obtain the use of the necessary books elsewhere". The report further states that the "development of the library will depend largely upon its relationship with existing libraries . . . it will need to be complementary and supplementary to such institutions. . . . It will supplement the book supplies of libraries which are unable, for various reasons, to store a number of duplicates of books for which, owing to the development of local studies, there is a temporary demand." It is clear from this that the library was not originally intended to serve the general public, as it does now, but only adult classes or private students who found it difficult to obtain books. The future connection with the public library system is already implicit, however.

The Central Library for Students began in a small way in a house in Tavistock Square with a staff of two and a stock of 1,392 books, which was inherited from its rather obscure predecessor, a library for Workers' Education Association and University Tutorial Classes at Toynbee Hall. During the following years the stock and the issues rose steadily. The connection with the public libraries became closer and closer, active collaboration beginning in 1917, when the first book was borrowed by a public library (Westhoughton P.L.). The first public library to subscribe to the Central Library was Kendal Public Library (1918). In 1920 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust made a special grant of £1,000 to the Central Library for six years on the understanding that the library would make every effort to aid "rural libraries" (as County Libraries were then called), by acting as a reservoir of expensive books and duplicate copies.

The beginnings of the present organized system of interlibrary



lending really go back to the year 1923-4 when, to quote the eighth annual report, "the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust have made grants to three special libraries in London (the College of Nursing, King's College for Women and the Royal Aeronautical Society) on condition that the works in the possession of these libraries are available for the clientele of the Central Library for Students". These are described in the report as "Outlying Libraries".

Already in 1919 the national importance of the Central Library for Students was being recognized. The Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction in their Third Interim Report on libraries and Museums expressed the need for a state-aided circulating library and recommended that the Central Library for Students should be regarded as the nucleus of such a library, the three main functions of which would be : (1) to act as a reservoir from which to supplement the book collections of local libraries by supplying on loan local demands for larger and more expensive works than public libraries can provide ; (2) to supply bibliographical information ; (3) to act as a clearing house and enlist the co-operation of public, central, technical and other libraries. In the same year (1919) the Library Association, at their Annual Conference, passed a resolution agreeing with this and suggesting to public libraries the desirability of making an annual subscription to the Central Library. The resolution also strongly recommended that the library should receive a government grant.

In the meantime the Central Library continued to receive financial support from the Carnegie Trust, after the expiration of the five-year experimental period. Colonel J. M. Mitchell, the Secretary of the Trustees, was an enthusiast in the cause of library co-operation and in his *Report on public libraries* (1924), he suggested that "the Central Library in Dunfermline should have in its possession the catalogues of all public libraries in Scotland (the principle would apply in England but it would mean a number of central libraries each with its own district) and should be able to borrow books from any public library for the use of another". This clearly points to the later Regional System and to the principle of a central clearing house.

Full official recognition of the necessity for a national system of interlibrary lending came in 1927 with the publication of the Report of the Departmental Committee on Public Libraries. This proposed a voluntary system of co-operation, the chief recommendations

being : the establishment of a system of regional libraries, the expansion of the Central Library for Students into a national centre linking up the regional libraries and the creation of a central cataloguing agency. The report recommended further that the Central Library for Students should receive an interim government grant of £5,000 per annum and that a committee should be set up to work out details of the transfer of the library to the control of the Trustees of the British Museum.

However, when the payment of this interim grant came up for discussion by the House of Commons, the question was referred to the Royal Commission on National Museums and Art Galleries, whose Final Report (Part I), published in 1929, only recommended a grant of £3,000 to the Central Library towards the cost of : (1) supply of bibliographical information ; (2) the promotion of the Outlier System of libraries ; (3) the preparation of a union catalogue.

In accordance with the wishes of the Treasury, the Trustees of the Central Library for Students adopted in 1930 a new constitution, which brought into being the National Central Library. The main differences between the new and the old constitutions lay in the composition of the governing body and to some extent in the object for which the library was being re-created. The National Central Library would no longer be controlled by private trustees but by a Board of Trustees at least half of whom were to be *ex-officio* members, appointed by such bodies as the Trustees of the British Museum, the Library Association and the Carnegie Trustees. Certain of the powers of the Trustees were to be delegated to an Executive Committee, appointed mainly by official bodies. Under the new constitution the chief objects of the library were to be :

1. To supply on loan to libraries, or in exceptional cases to individuals, books for study.
2. To supply such books on loan to groups of adult students.
3. To act as a clearing house for mutual loans of such books between other libraries.
4. To act as a centre of bibliographical information both for national and international purposes.

It is worth comparing these objects with those for which the Central Library for Students was founded : for, whereas in 1916 the

emphasis was on loans to individuals, these are now to be the exception, and in fact, from 1930 onwards, the individual students who had formerly been served by the Central Library for Students were normally supplied with books by the National Central Library only through the intermediary of the Public Libraries or University and Special Libraries, thus making full use of the resources of local libraries before tapping those of the N.C.L.

In the following year the library was granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation. This confirmed the new constitution already adopted by the Trustees of the Central Library. Two years later (1933) the library found a more suitable home in its present premises, situated between University College and the great new building of the University of London, still within the "sphere of influence" of the British Museum and most appropriately next door to Chaucer House, the headquarters of our public library system. The opening of this new building by His Majesty King George V brought the library for a brief moment into the limelight and to the notice of the general public.

With the establishment of the library in its new building the period of rapid growth and change was succeeded by one of consolidation and of the steady realization of existing plans. It seems fitting at this point, therefore, that some description should be given of the manner in which the library is organized and of the way in which it carries out the functions already outlined. Before doing this, however, a word must be said about the relationship of the library to the Regional Systems, to the Universities and to the Outlier Libraries.

Concrete proposals for the establishment of regional systems originated, as has been said, with the report of the Departmental Committee on Public Libraries in 1927, but, although a small regional system covering the County of Cornwall came into existence in 1928, this was hardly more than a "pilot" scheme and it was not until 1931 that the first full-scale systems were established: those for the Northern and the West Midlands areas. To each of the new regional systems the Carnegie Trustees made a grant for the purpose of building up a union catalogue of the works in the libraries co-operating, in order to facilitate interlending and make the fullest use of the library resources of each region. These union catalogues were to be duplicated and combined at the National Central Library to produce a National Union Catalogue. In the years following,

the Welsh, the South Eastern, the East Midland, the Yorkshire, the North Western and the South Western systems were created, the Yorkshire system dispensing, however, with a union catalogue. At the National Central Library itself were housed the South Eastern Regional Bureau and the "London Union Catalogue" or headquarters of the London interlending system, covering most of the Borough Libraries in London. The National Central Library acted as the clearing house to which were sent requests for loans which could not be satisfied within the regions. Using as its chief tool the National Union Catalogue, the library then tapped the resources of the other Bureaux.

Interlending between the universities dates from the year 1925, when the Joint Standing Committee on Library Co-operation was founded by the Association of University Teachers. The Committee established an Inquiry Office at Birmingham University for the purpose of arranging loans between the university libraries and also some special and foreign libraries. In October, 1931, this Office was transferred to the National Central Library and the work of acting as clearing house for inter-university loans was taken on by its Information Department.

Something has already been said regarding the origin of the Outlier Libraries. These agree to lend their books to other libraries through the agency of the N.C.L., in return for which they are entitled to borrow books from the N.C.L. itself, or, through it, from its other outlier libraries or from the co-operating university libraries or the libraries in regional systems. Originally the Carnegie Trustees made special grants to the majority of new outlier libraries so that by the year 1931 a total of £84,425 had been granted by the Trust to this group of libraries. After this year these grants were terminated as the funds set aside were exhausted. Many of the Outlier Libraries contributed cards to the special Outlier Union Catalogue which the N.C.L. was in the process of building up. The majority of the outliers are special libraries, but originally this group contained a considerable number of municipal and county libraries, which have since become absorbed in the regional systems (such, for example, as Croydon Public Library and Derbyshire County Library), so that at the present time, with the exception of a very small number of the old public library outliers, which have not yet joined regional systems, the outliers are all special libraries. They cover a wide field of knowledge and include in their number such very different

libraries as Dr. Williams's Library (theology), the London School of Economics and the Science Library. A complete list of the outlier libraries will be found in the latest annual report of the library. Those London borough libraries which contribute to the London Union Catalogue are each of them outliers of the N.C.L. and form collectively what amounts to a separate regional system. Applications to the N.C.L. can be forwarded by the L.U.C., while requests for loans by the N.C.L. are sent direct to individual libraries.

We are now in a position to describe the actual functioning of the library. It is divided into three main departments, which are, in order of seniority: the Adult Class Department, the Library Department, and the Information Department. These represent different stages in the library's growth. The Adult Class Department fulfils one of the original functions of the Central Library for Students, that is, lending books to organized classes of students. Its bookstock, before being in great part destroyed in 1941, was based on the original stock of the Central Library. It contains multiple copies of many works (as well as single copies of others) for class use. Applications for loans are made by classes either through a public library, or the extra-mural departments of universities or through some similar institution, and they take the shape of lists of books, which are required, usually, for several months. The majority of classes begin in the autumn, the books being returned some six months later, in the spring. A lesser number of books are also loaned, generally for shorter periods, during the summer months.

The Library Department is a central reservoir of expensive books for public and other libraries to draw on, and also, to a limited extent, a storehouse in which can be kept useful books which libraries can no longer afford the space to house. This collection of books, as opposed to that in the Adult Class Department, is now the main stock of the library and its beginnings go back to the days when individuals and libraries, as distinguished from classes, began to borrow from the Central Library. The stock has been built up on the principle (abandoned to some extent during the war) of acquiring books as and when asked for and only if they fulfil certain conditions as regards price and subject. Originally, no books costing less than 6s. (now 8s. 6d.) were purchased, works of fiction and sets of books used for examination being also excluded. Apart from books which have been discarded by libraries and which are offered by them to the N.C.L. for retention or for re-distribution to other

libraries, a great many books are given to the library by private individuals or institutions, entire collections being sometimes presented. These donations form a valuable contribution to the library's stock. By 1941, when a large part of the Malet Place premises was destroyed by fire, the stock had risen to 176,961, but no fewer than 104,349 books were destroyed in the night of 16th-17th April, 1941. The Dewey classification is used, but this is a matter of no great moment as the public do not have access to the shelves. The staff in the Library Department receive and deal with all applications from whatever source, except those for adult class books. Every work asked for by another library is checked in the catalogue to discover whether it is in the library's own stock or not. If it is, the book is taken from the shelves and despatched at once, unless it be on loan, in which case the borrower is put on a waiting list. The application form is filed with particulars of the date of issue, accession number of the copy loaned, etc., filled in. If the work is not in the stock of the library and is considered to be of a suitable type, a copy is purchased, if one is obtainable. If the book is out of print or not suitable for purchase, the application form is passed on to the Information Department for tracing in some other library.

The Information Department was inaugurated in 1931 and exists for the dual purpose of locating and obtaining books which cannot be supplied from the library's own stock and for giving information about books. The function of an "Information Department" in a special library being, however, to supply mainly factual information, the "Information Department" of the N.C.L. is perhaps rather misleadingly named, as its responsibility in this direction is limited to supplying bibliographical information. Its chief duties can be summarized briefly as being: (1) to identify books asked for; (2) to trace the whereabouts of loanable copies; (3) to arrange for the loan of these to the borrowers. In addition to these tasks and to supplying bibliographies and bibliographical information generally, it has also to deal with a certain number of "subject" applications, that is, requests for the best available book or article on a given subject. The "clearing house" functions of the Information Department have, in the past, always taken precedence over its bibliographical duties, owing to lack of staff. A small but regular amount of purely bibliographical work is, however, dealt with and it is to be hoped that the staff position in the future will allow of an expansion of the work in this direction.



The necessity of verifying the authors and titles of books, and the titles of periodicals asked for, is largely a result of the inadequate bibliographical apparatus at the disposal of most local libraries and regional bureaux. It is a task which takes up a large proportion of the time of the library-trained staff of this department, who make use for this purpose of a fairly comprehensive collection of general and current bibliographies (e.g. the *United States catalogue*, the *English catalogue*, *Whitaker's book index*, the *British Museum subject index*, the *Bibliothèque Nationale catalogue*, the *World list of scientific periodicals*, the *Union list of serials*, etc.) and a growing selection of special bibliographies (such, for instance, as the *Surgeon General's catalogue*, the *London bibliography of the social sciences*, the *Catalogue of the Royal Empire Society*, and the printed catalogues of other special libraries). The *Depository catalogue* (on cards) of the Library of Congress, which will be spoken of later in connection with the Bureau of American Bibliography, is of the greatest utility.

Having verified the author and title, the next step is to trace a loanable copy of the work. For this purpose the chief instruments are the Union Catalogues. The National Union Catalogue or combined catalogue of the regional systems has already been mentioned. It is unfortunately far from being up-to date or complete, as considerable arrears of entries, to be inserted or withdrawn, have accumulated during the war years, and also because some of the regional systems have not yet furnished the N.C.L. with the carbon copies of their entries. In spite of these limitations the catalogue is of great use, approximately half of the titles checked being located. It takes the form of a sheaf catalogue arranged alphabetically by authors, each entry being of the briefest kind and containing only such details as are necessary for the identification of an edition. It is no more than a finding list and has no pretension whatever to bibliographical completeness, as have some American union catalogues. The different regional systems are indicated by the colour of their slips, the library which actually possesses the book not being shown, as application for the loan of a book located in the catalogue is made to the appropriate regional bureau and not to the local library. The book is then located by the Regional Bureau in the Regional Union Catalogue. A considerable amount of space in the National Catalogue is saved by combining on one slip all the locations for a book which is in several regions.

The second main source of locations is the Outlier Union Catalogue. This was built up partly of contributions from outlier libraries (including some of those now absorbed in the regions) and partly as the result of entries made by the staff of the Information Department for works located in universities, outliers or other special libraries, by trial and error methods. It is on cards and arranged by authors, periodicals being kept in a separate sequence, and it contains approximately a quarter of a million entries. The majority of the works included in this catalogue being of a specialized nature, many of them having actually been asked for before, the proportion of "finds" in a given batch of applications is reasonably high (say about 20-25 per cent).

Other sources which are used regularly to obtain locations are the London Union Catalogue and the South Eastern Regional Catalogue, both housed at the Malet Place premises. An information file and files of past applications are also used for this purpose. The former is an index and file of short bibliographies and sources of information on subjects about which requests have been received.

A fairly high proportion (one half to one third) of works dealt with by this department are either not located in any union catalogue or printed catalogue of a library from which they can be borrowed, or it turns out that the works located are not actually available for loan when application is made for them. This means that search lists have to be drawn up, duplicated and sent to various groups of libraries. This involves a good deal of clerical work as, at the present time, two lists per week, each of two or three hundred titles, are sent to the regional bureaux and one similar list to the universities, while a number of shorter special lists are sent to groups of outliers such as medical or agricultural libraries. This somewhat cumbersome method of locating books takes a good deal of time, especially as most libraries take a considerable time to check them, owing to lack of staff, but it is doubtful whether this procedure can ever be wholly dispensed with, even when the union catalogues approach completion, especially in cases where a rigorous search has to be made.

More clerical work is involved in the process of arranging the actual loan. On each application form are marked, in serial order, all the procedures that may have to be applied in order to obtain the required book. The locations found in the union catalogues are first used, but if the book proves to be unobtainable from these

libraries, one or more special outliers may be tried according to the nature of the book, and finally the inquiry may have to be included on a bureau or university list. When all the sources tried have failed, the final process consists, normally, in informing the borrowing library that the book is unobtainable.

A word should be said here about foreign loans. These were originated by the Birmingham Office of the Joint Standing Committee on Library Co-operation of the A.U.T. and they became the responsibility of the N.C.L. in 1931. The system adopted by most countries is briefly as follows. An application from a local library in any country is forwarded to the recognized national centre in that country (generally the national library), which transmits it to the national centre in the foreign country considered most likely to possess a copy of the work required. The book, assuming that it exists in that foreign country, is then either lent by the national centre of that country, or is located elsewhere by that centre, by means of a union catalogue or by some other method. If it is available, it is then transmitted through the national centres to the borrowing library. The object of this procedure is to make sure firstly, that a book which is asked for on loan does not exist in the country of origin of the application and, secondly, that the book is searched for in a systematic manner in the country to which the request is sent. The volume of international loans was, intentionally, never very great. At its peak in 1938-9 this country lent 508 books to different foreign countries and borrowed 283. The machinery for lending between one country and another is slow and inclined to be expensive and hence should not be used except in cases of real need and where a book is not obtainable in the borrower's own country. The war, of course, interrupted this form of international co-operation, but it has, in spite of many transport and other difficulties, been resumed on a reduced scale between Great Britain and a dozen or so European countries. The same system is in force as formerly, the principle of transmission of applications through recognized centres being even more widely observed than used to be the case. There exists, of course, a danger that, as a result of the disorganization and book losses suffered by many continental libraries, the machinery of inter-lending might be overworked. International loans can never fill gaps in the stocks of war-damaged libraries and so the type of book which one might reasonably expect to find in any European country should not be borrowed from another country.

No details have yet been given of the Bureau of American Bibliography established on the 1st January, 1938, and financed by the Rockefeller Foundation. The Bureau is intended to act as a centre for the supply of information about American books. The Rockefeller grants enabled a select collection of American reference books to be purchased, but the chief instrument used by the Bureau in answering inquiries is the complete set of Library of Congress cards (author entries) which has been a gift of the Library of Congress. The receipt of new cards for the catalogue was unfortunately interrupted by the war, so that at the present time there are very large arrears of entries to be inserted. The Bureau works in close collaboration with the American Library at the United States Embassy and, in addition to answering outside inquiries, is invaluable to the Information Department in solving its many problems in connection with the identification of American books and periodicals.

We have now surveyed briefly the early history and development of the library and its organization and routine functioning have been outlined. A few words may now be added about its history since 1933.

As regards the all-important financial aspect of the library's development one cannot do better than quote the following words written by the librarian, Mr. R. H. Hill\*: "The development and potentialities of the library have always outstripped the available financial provision. From the outset to 1929 it was financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions from Trusts, libraries, and private subscribers. In 1930 its growing importance as a national asset secured some recognition by an annual grant from state funds of £3,000. In the second year of the grant, however, grounds of urgent national retrenchment reduced this sum to £2,850 and in the next three years to £2,700. This was restored for 1935-6 to £3,000. For the next five years the grant was increased to £5,000 conditional on continued support from the Carnegie Trustees and a considerable increase of contributions from libraries. Although the latter condition was not fully implemented, the grant was continued for 1938-9. Imperative need for economy in Government expenditure reduced the annual sum to £4,800 in the first year of the war, to £3,500 in the second, and to £4,500 in the remaining years. It is true to say that the development of the library, and even its continued existence on any scale, have only been made possible by the continued generosity

\* *Library world*, May, 1946, p. 156.

of the Carnegie Trust, and during the last war by the timely aid of the Rockefeller Foundation." It is only necessary to add that the Treasury increased the grant to £7,500 for the financial year 1946-7.

At the outbreak of the war the stock of the library had reached approximately 170,000 volumes. The total issues, including those made as a result of the library's "clearing house" activities, but excluding those of the Adult Class Department, rose to a peak, 53,091 in 1933-4, then fell during 1934-6 to 36,142, after which they rose again steadily to 46,715 in the last pre-war year, 1938-9. The cause of the fall in issues was undoubtedly the fact that many libraries which had been applying direct to the N.C.L. were now sending their requests to their regional bureaux and that a good proportion of these requests was being satisfied from within the regions.

During the war the library, like so many others, suffered severe handicaps. Many members of the staff left in order to undertake war service and they had to be replaced, as far as possible, by temporary staff who, though inexperienced in this type of work, performed wonders. Owing to the foresight of the librarian, Dr. L. Newcombe, the Information Department, together with its irreplaceable union catalogues, was evacuated to Hertfordshire in the autumn of 1939 and was thus spared the fate of the Library and Adult Class Departments which suffered such heavy damage by enemy action in April, 1941. The Adult Class Department lost the whole of its own stock, with the exception of some 5,000 books out on loan at the time, while the main stock of the Library was reduced to 72,612 books.

The issues naturally declined during the early years of the war, the total (including Adult Classes) having decreased from 58,683 in 1938-9 to 39,420 in 1940-1. If the following year, 1941-2, saw an increase to 43,410 in the total issues, in spite of the disastrous loss of stock with which it began, the explanation lies in the greatly increased number of applications received and in the consequent expansion of the library's "clearing house" functions. The increase of that year was continued and by 1945-6 the total issues were 59,671, thus exceeding the figure for the last pre-war year, while in 1946-7 the total reached 66,000. The rebuilding of the stock was proceeding steadily at the same time, the total number of volumes in the library being 105,974 at the end of February, 1947.

At the end of 1944 the librarian, Dr. L. Newcombe, retired and was succeeded by Mr. R. H. Hill, who came to the N.C.L. from the Bodleian Library, of which he was Secretary. Dr. Newcombe's

period of office which began in 1926 thus corresponded with the most critical years of the library's development: it saw the change from the Central Library for Students to the National Central Library, the creation of the regional systems and their union catalogues, and the growth of the outlier system of libraries, both of which developments owe so much to him.

In the spring of 1945 the Information Department returned to London but, as it could no longer be housed in the blitzed premises at Malet Place, had to be accommodated in a house in Woburn Square, some five minutes' walk from the main building. This separation into two buildings is naturally a disadvantage; it is therefore to be hoped that the main premises will be rebuilt as soon as circumstances permit.

It remains to speak of some post-war activities of the library. First, concerning the distribution of books to war-damaged libraries: the responsibility for this work was taken over by UNESCO from the Inter-Allied Book Centre when this closed down at the end of 1946. The books and periodicals collected by the Inter-Allied Book Centre, which were still undistributed, were stored at the N.C.L. At the end of the summer of 1947 UNESCO was obliged to discontinue its administration of the Book Centre which was now taken over by the N.C.L. This new department of the library, the National Book Centre, is part of the wider UNESCO project for an International Clearing House for Publications. The functions of the National Book Centre are to centralize and co-ordinate the exchange and distribution of books and periodicals in this country and between Great Britain and other countries.

These functions are really a continuation of those already undertaken by the library on a small scale in pre-war days, when the N.C.L. acted as the distributing centre through which books and periodicals, discarded by libraries or presented by individual donors, could be passed on to other libraries where they were most needed. In the year 1938-9, 7,977 books and periodicals were distributed to 117 libraries.

Two new union cataloguing projects have been undertaken since the war. Work recently began on a union catalogue of Russian books in British libraries and also on a union catalogue of German wartime and post-war publications received in this country. Each of these two catalogues will fill an important gap in our bibliographical resources.



There are also, of course, many other types of co-operative enterprise in which the library may take a share, such, for instance, as the much debated scheme for centralized cataloguing. All these great possibilities are, however, dependent on accommodation and on financial support and so, ultimately, on our post-war recovery.

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# INDEX

(Names in capitals denote collections in these subjects)

- Acworth (Sir William) Collection, 143  
 ACTS OF PARLIAMENT, *see* LAW; LEGISLATION, LOCAL  
 ADMINISTRATION, *see* GOVERNMENT  
 Admiralty Library, 120  
 Adult classes, books supplied to, 137, 210  
 AFRICA, 136  
 AGRICULTURE, 38, 121;  
     *see also* BOTANY  
 Air Ministry Library, 121-22  
 Allan Library, 157  
 ANATOMY, 177, 182;  
     *see also* MEDICINE; SURGERY  
 ANTHROPOLOGY, 38;  
     *see also* ARCHAEOLOGY  
 ARCHAEOLOGY, 52, 131, 135, 157, 190  
 ARCHITECTURE, 47, 53;  
     *see also* BUILDING  
 ARCHIVES:  
     binding, 75-76;  
     business, 144;  
     collections, 55;  
     definition, 56-57;  
     London parishes and livery companies, 189;  
     repairing, 74-76  
 ARCHIVES, NATIONAL:  
     catalogues, 79;  
     consultation, 78-80;  
     custody, 58-61;  
     elimination, 63-65;  
     grouping, 61-63;  
     labelling, 70;  
     make-up, 71-74;  
     museum, 86-87;  
     numbering, 68-69;  
     preservation, reasons for, 63-65;  
     publication, 80-86;  
     publications in the Guildhall Library, 190;  
     publications in House of Lords Library, 112;  
     sorting, 67-68;  
     storage, 65-67, 69-70;  
     the Summary of Records, 68-69;  
     *see also* Public Record Office  
 ARMS AND ARMOUR, 53  
 ART, 48-54, 131, 135, 157;  
     *see also* ARCHITECTURE  
 Ashendene Press publications, 132  
 ASLIB, 7  
 Assistance Board Library, 122  
 Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians, 198, 202  
 Association of University Teachers, Joint Standing Committee on Library Co-operation, 209, 214  
 ASTRONOMY, 131  
 AUTOGRAPHS, 135, 163;  
     *see also* MANUSCRIPTS  
 AVIATION, 122, 123  
 BACON, FRANCIS, 131, 166  
 Baker, Dr. E. A., 4  
 BANK REPORTS, 143  
 Banks, Sir Joseph, 11, 28, 29  
 Bar Library, 161, 166-67  
 Barlow (Henry Clark) Library, 129  
 Barnard, C. C., 178  
 Barry, Sir Charles, 108, 111  
 Bentham (Jeremy) Library, 129  
 BIBLE, 157  
 BIBLIOGRAPHY, 131, 190;  
     *see also* BINDINGS; BOOK PRODUCTION; INCUNABULA; MANUSCRIPTS; PRINTING  
 BINDINGS, 135  
 BIOGRAPHY, 53, 162, 165;  
     *see also* GENEALOGY  
 BIRDS, *see* ORNITHOLOGY  
 Board of Inland Revenue Library, 121  
 Board of Trade Library, 119  
 Bonar (James) Collection, 144  
 BOOK COLLECTING, 53  
 BOOK ILLUSTRATION, 53  
 BOOK PRODUCTION, 53  
 BOOK TRADE, 143  
 Borough libraries, *see* London borough libraries  
 BOTANY, 27-41;  
     drawings, 31-33, 39;  
     manuscripts, 12

- Bray, John Francis, manuscripts of, 144
- BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, 118-19;  
*see also* GEOGRAPHY; HISTORY
- British Council Medical Section Library, 180
- British Dental Association Library, 180
- British Library of Political and Economic Science:  
 accommodation, 145-46;  
 book selection, 148-49;  
 catalogues, 140, 141, 143;  
 cataloguing, 141, 149;  
 classification, 146;  
 collections, 140, 141-45;  
 Dickinson, W. C., librarian, 140;  
 foundation, 139;  
 government publications, 142;  
 Headicar, B. M., librarian, 140;  
 lending library, 147-48;  
*A London bibliography of the social sciences*, 147;  
 periodicals, 145;  
 readers, 145;  
 staff, 148, 149
- British Medical Association Library, 176, 177, 178, 179, 183
- British medical bulletin*, 180
- British Museum:  
 administration, 17-26;  
 admission, 12-15;  
 acquisitions, 10-12;  
 bindery, 24-25;  
 book fund, 19;  
 catalogues, 15-17, 22-25, 28;  
 cataloguing, 22-25;  
 classification in Reading Room, 13;  
 donations, 10, 20-21;  
 exchanges, 21-22;  
 medical collections, 174;  
 natural history collections, 27-29;  
 Panizzi, Sir Anthony, 10;  
 purchase of books, 19-20;  
 special collections, 11-12;  
 staff, 25-26;  
 war damage and replacements, 20, 26
- British Museum (Natural History):  
 acquisitions, 27-30;  
 bibliographies, 31;  
 catalogues, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35;  
 classification, 31;  
 British Museum (Natural History), *continued*:  
 drawings and manuscripts, 31-34, 35;  
 periodicals, 31, 35
- British Psychological Society Library, 180
- British Records Association, 91
- BROADSIDES, 53, 135, 190
- BUILDING, 124;  
*see also* ARCHITECTURE
- Bureau of American Bibliography, 215
- Burney (Charles) Collection, 11
- Burrows (Ronald) Collection, 129
- BUSINESS ARCHIVES, 144
- BYZANTINE HISTORY, 129
- CALLIGRAPHY, 53; *see also* ART
- Cannan (Edward) Collection, 144
- Carlyle, Thomas, 150-52, 153
- Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 140, 205, 206, 209, 215-16
- CELTIC LITERATURE, 129
- CENSUS, 121
- Central Library for Students, 204-08;  
*see also* National Central Library
- Central Medical Library Bureau, 179, 183, 184
- Central Office of Information, 123
- CERAMICS, 53
- CHARTERS, 12; *see also* ARCHIVES
- Chaucer House, 6, 8
- CHILD WELFARE, 118;  
*see also* EDUCATION
- Christie, William Dougal, 150, 152
- CIVIL WAR, *see* HISTORY: English, Civil war
- CLASSICAL LITERATURE, 131  
*see also* GREEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
- A classification for medical libraries*, 178
- Clements (H. J. B.) Collection, 53
- Clockmakers' Company Library, 190
- CLOCKS AND WATCHES, 53, 190
- Cock (Alfred) Collection, 190
- COINS, 53; *see also* ARCHAEOLOGY
- College libraries, 3, 129, 136-37;  
*see also* British Library of Political and Economic Science

- Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices Library, 118;  
 Indian Section, 119  
 COMMONWEALTH (English history), *see*  
 HISTORY: English, Civil war  
 Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, 38  
 Cook, Captain James, drawings and manuscripts relating to his voyages, 32, 33  
 Co-operation between borough libraries, 197-98;  
 science libraries, 46;  
 the University and college libraries, 136-37  
 Copyright deposit, 10, 17-19  
 COSTUME, 53  
 Cotton (Sir Robert Bruce) Collection, 12  
 County libraries, 3  
 Cowley, J. D., 4  
 CRIMINOLOGY, 144; *see also* LAW  
 Customs and Excise Library, 120
- DANTE ALIGHIERI, 129  
 DEMOGRAPHY, 145  
 De Morgan (Augustus) Library, 131  
 DENTISTRY, 180;  
*see also* MEDICINE; SURGERY  
 Department of Scientific and Industrial Research Library, 122-23  
 DESIGN, 48-54; *see also* ART  
 Dickinson, W. C., 140  
 Dobbin, Dr. Roy, 183  
 DOCUMENTS, *see* ARCHIVES  
 Doves Press publications, 132  
 DRAWINGS (fine art), 52  
 Dryander, Jonas, 28  
 Durning-Lawrence (Sir Edwin) Library, 131  
 Dyce (Rev. Alexander) Collection, 53
- ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY, 145;  
*see also* ECONOMICS; GEOGRAPHY  
 ECONOMICS, 130-31, 143, 145  
 EDUCATION, 120-21, 131;  
*see also* CHILD WELFARE  
 ELECTRICITY, 129;  
*see also* TECHNOLOGY  
 ENAMELS, 53; *see also* ART  
 ENGLAND: History, *see* HISTORY:  
 English
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,  
 11, 53, 129, 162  
 ENTOMOLOGY, 29, 30, 37-38;  
*see also* AGRICULTURE; NATURAL  
 HISTORY; ZOOLOGY  
 Esdaile, Arundell, 10
- FINE ARTS, *see* ART  
 FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION,  
 123  
 Foreign Office Library, 118  
 FORESTRY, 38;  
*see also* AGRICULTURE; BOTANY  
 Forster (John) Library, 53  
 Fortescue, Sir John, 162  
 FRENCH REVOLUTION, 11;  
*see also* HISTORY  
 Friends of the National Libraries, 20  
 Fry (Sir Edward) Library, 140, 144  
 FUEL, 124  
 FURNITURE, 53  
 Furnivall (Frederick James) Library,  
 129
- Gardeners' Company Library, 190  
 GARDENING, *see* HORTICULTURE  
 Garrick, David, 11  
 GENEALOGY, 162, 165, 189, 190;  
*see also* HERALDRY  
 General Post Office Library, 120  
 GEODESY, 119; *see also* ASTRONOMY  
 Geological Society of London, 36  
 Geological Survey and Museum of  
 Practical Geology, 37, 42  
 GEOLOGY, 29, 36-37, 42;  
*see also* NATURAL HISTORY  
 GEOGRAPHY, 47, 145;  
*see also* TOPOGRAPHY  
 George III, King, 11  
 German Union Catalogue, 217  
 Gillray, James, political caricatures,  
 112  
 GLASS, 53  
 Golden Cockerel Press publications,  
 132  
 Goldsmiths' Library of Economic  
 Literature, 130-31, 135  
 GOVERNMENT, 107-10, 111-14;  
*see also* ECONOMICS  
 Government libraries:  
 general, 115-17;  
 Admiralty, 120;  
 Air Ministry, 121-22;

Government libraries, *continued*:

- Assistance Board, 122 ;
- Board of Inland Revenue, 121 ;
- Board of Trade, 119 ;
- Central Office of Information, 123 ;
- Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices, 118 ;
- Indian Section (formerly India Office), 119 ;
- Customs and Excise, 120 ;
- Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, 122-23 ;
- Foreign Office, 118 ;
- General Post Office, 120 ;
- Home Office, 118 ;
- Ministry of Agriculture, 121 ;
  - Civil Aviation, 123 ;
  - Education, 120 ;
  - Food, 123 ;
  - Fuel and Power, 124 ;
  - Health, 121, 179-80 ;
  - Labour, 122 ;
  - National Insurance, 123 ;
  - Pensions, 122 ;
  - Supply (formerly Aircraft Production), 123-24 ;
  - Town and Country Planning, 124 ;
  - Transport, 122 ;
  - Works and Buildings, 124 ;
- Scottish Office, 121 ;
- Treasury and Cabinet Offices, 117 ;
- War Office, 119
- GRAMOPHONE RECORDS, 134
- Gray's Inn Library, 161, 166
- GREEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, 129 ; *see also* LITERATURE
- Grenville, Thomas, 12
- Grote (George) Library, 131
- Grotius Society Library, 172
- Guildhall Library:
  - book selection, 188-89 ;
  - City archives, 55 ;
  - collections, 189-90 ;
  - history, 185-89 ;
  - loans, 190 ;
  - manuscripts, 189, 190 ;
  - prints, 189 ;
  - war damage, 188
- Guy's Hospital Medical School Library, 177, 183
- GYNAECOLOGY, 183 ;
- see also* MEDICINE ; SURGERY

## Hammersmith Postgraduate Medical

School Library, 178

Hardwicke Society Library, 172

Harleian Collection, 12

Headicar, B. M., 140

HERALDRY, 53 ; *see also* GENEALOGYHERBALS, 182 ; *see also* MEDICINE

Hill, R. H., 216

Hirsch Library, 12

Historical Manuscripts Commission, 90

## HISTORY:

- general collections, 119, 120, 129, 131, 157-58, 167 ;

- Byzantine, 129 ;

- English, 165, 187 ;

- Civil war, 11, 144 ;

- colonial, 119, 145 ;

- county, 162, 189, 190 ;

- London, 189 ;

- military, 120 ;

- naval, 120 ;

- political, 12, 144 ;

- social life, 123, 157 ;

- Oriental, 136 ;

- Russian, 136, 157, 158 ;

- social and economic, 145 ;

- Spanish Civil War, 144

Home Office Library, 118

Horniman Museum and Library, 38-39

HORTICULTURE, 39, 40 ;

*see also* BOTANY

House of Commons Library, 107-10

House of Lords Library, 111-14

Hunterian Library, Glasgow, 181

Hunterian Museum, 177

Hutchinson (Henry Hunt) Collection, 144

HYGIENE, 177-78, 180 ;

*see also* MEDICINE ; PUBLIC HEALTH

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS, 53 ;

*see also* MANUSCRIPTS

Imperial Cancer Research Fund Library, 180

INCUNABULA, 11, 157 ;

*see also* PRINTING: history

Index Kewensis, 40

INDIA, 119

India Office Library, 119

INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY, 92-106

INDUSTRY AND TRADE, 119, 120, 122,  
189, 190

Inner Temple Library, 162-63

Inns of Court Libraries, 160-73

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies,  
172

INSURANCE, 123 ;

*see also* SOCIAL SCIENCES

Inter-Allied Book Centre, 217

Inter-availability of readers' tickets in  
London borough libraries, 199-  
200

INTERIOR DECORATION, 53

International exchange of books, 21,  
217

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND RELATIONS,  
118, 140 ; *see also* LAW

International Law Association Lib-  
rary, 172

International loans, 214

INVENTIONS, 92-106

JEWELLERY, 53

JURISPRUDENCE, *see* LAW

Kelmscott Press publications, 132

Kenyon, Sir Frederic, 4

King's College Library, 129

King's Library (British Museum), 11

King's Music Library (British  
Museum), 12

Knight, Charles, 187

LABOUR CONDITIONS, 122 ;

*see also* ECONOMICS

LANGUAGES, *see* PHILOLOGY

LAW, 111, 118, 121, 140, 144, 160-73 ;

American, 165, 171-72 ;

international, 118, 140

Law libraries, 160-73

Law Society Library, 161, 167

LEGISLATION, LOCAL, 167 ;

Health, 121 ;

Transport, 122 ; *see also* LAW

Lewis, Messrs. H. K., 178

Library Association, 4, 5, 6

Library of Congress classification,  
146 ;

depository catalogue, 212, 215

Lincoln's Inn Library, 161, 165

Lindley (John) Library, 40

Linnean Society of London, 36

LINNAEUS, CARL, 34, 36

Lister Institute of Preventive Medi-  
cine, 180

LITERATURE, 129, 131, 157-58 ;

*see also* ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, 143, 144

LONDON, 186-90 ;

portraits and prints, 158

*A London bibliography of the social  
sciences*, 147

London borough libraries:

Advisory Body of Librarians, 198 ;

Association of Metropolitan Chief  
Librarians, 198 ;

commercial reference libraries, 202 ;

"coverage", 196-97, 202 ;

history, 194-96 ;

inter-availability of tickets, 199 ;

London Joint Fiction Reserve,  
200-01 ;

London Union Catalogue, 198-99 ;

Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing  
Joint Committee, 198 ;

standardization, 199, 202-03 ;

statistics, 197 ;

subject specialization, 201-02

*London gazette*, 167, 190

London Joint Fiction Reserve, 200-01

London Library:

accommodation, 153-54, 156 ;

administration, 154-56 ;

catalogues, 159 ;

classification, 159 ;

Cochrane, J. G., librarian, 152 ;

committee members, 155 ;

Donne, W. B., librarian, 156 ;

foundation, 150-52 ;

librarians, 156 ;

Royal Charter, 154-55 ;

stock, 156-58 ;

war damage, 154 ;

Wright, Sir C. T. Hagberg, lib-  
rarian, 153-54, 156, 159

London School of Economics Library,  
*see* British Library of Political  
and Economic Science

London School of Hygiene and  
Tropical Medicine, 41, 176, 177-  
78, 182-83

London Union Catalogue, 198-99,  
209

London University, *see* University of  
London



McKillop, John, 140  
 Manchester Medical Library, 176, 179  
 Manorial records, 89-90  
 Mansbridge, Dr. Albert, 205

# MANUSCRIPTS:

autograph letters, 135, 163;  
 British Museum, 12;  
 British Museum (Natural History),  
 33-34;

Guildhall Library, 189, 190;  
 Inner Temple, 162-63;  
 Lincoln's Inn, 165;  
 Medical Society of London, 182;  
 University of London, 131

MAPS, 14-15; *see also* GEOGRAPHY;  
 TOPOGRAPHY

Marsden (William) Library, 129

MATHEMATICS, 129, 131

MEDALS, 53; *see also* ARCHAEOLOGY

Medical abstracts, 179

Medical libraries:

historical collections, 180;  
 incunabula, 180;  
 indexing services, 183;  
 inter-library loans, 178;  
 manuscripts, 181;  
 union catalogues of periodicals, 183,  
 184;

British Council Medical Section,  
 180

British Medical Association, 176,  
 178, 179, 183-84;

British Museum, 174, 179, 181;

Central Medical Library Bureau,  
 179, 184;

Guy's Hospital Medical School,  
 177, 183;

Lewis, Messrs. H. K., 178;

London School of Hygiene and  
 Tropical Medicine, 176, 177-  
 78, 182-83;

Medical Research Council, 176, 180,  
 183-84;

Medical Society of London, 175,  
 182;

Ministry of Health, 179-80;

Postgraduate Medical School,  
 Hammersmith, 178;

Royal College of Obstetricians and  
 Gynaecologists, 175, 183;

Royal College of Physicians, 174-  
 75, 182;

Medical libraries, *continued*:

Royal College of Surgeons of  
 England, 175, 177, 179, 182,  
 183;

Royal Society of Medicine, 175,  
 178-79;

St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical  
 College, 176, 183;

St. Thomas's Hospital Medical  
 School, 176-77;

Society of Apothecaries, 175, 182;

University College, Thane Medical  
 Library, 177, 183;

Wellcome Historical Medical Lib-  
 rary, 174, 181-82

Medical Research Council, 176, 180,  
 183-84

Medical Society of London, 175, 182

MEDICINE, 11, 38, 121, 174-84;  
 bibliography, 183, 184;

classification scheme for, 178;

historical collections, 180-83

Mendham (Joseph) Library, 167

METALWORK, 53

METEOROLOGY, 122;

*see also* NATURAL HISTORY

Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing  
 Joint Committee, 198-99

Middle Temple Library, 161, 163-65

MILITARY SCIENCE, 119

Mill, John Stuart, 144

MINERALOGY, 29;

*see also* NATURAL HISTORY

MINES AND MINING, 124

Ministry of ——— Library, *see under*  
 Government libraries, Ministry  
 of ———

Mitchell, J. M., 206

MORE, SIR THOMAS, 190

Morton, Leslie, *Medical bibliography*,  
 183

Municipal libraries, *see* London  
 borough libraries

Murray, Sir John, 30

MUSIC, 11-12, 14-15, 16, 134

NATIONAL ARCHIVES, *see* ARCHIVES,  
 NATIONAL

National Book Centre, 217

National Central Library:

Adult Class Department, 210, 216;

Bureau of American Bibliography,  
 212, 215;

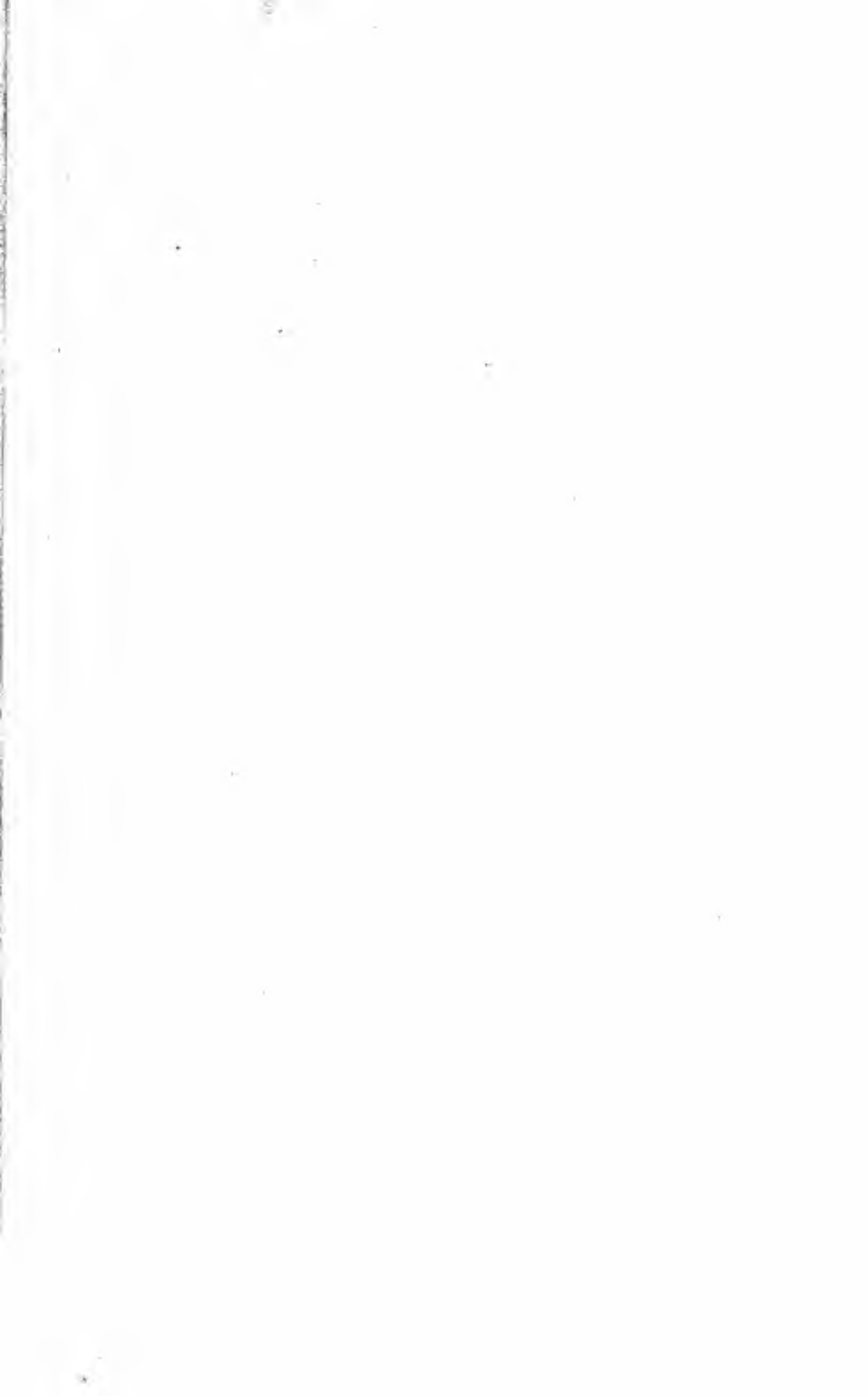
- National Central Library, *continued*:  
 Central Library for Students, 204, 205-06;  
 Hill, R. H., librarian, 215, 216;  
 history, 204-08, 216;  
 Information Department, 209, 210, 211-12, 216, 217;  
 Inter-Allied Book Centre, 217;  
 international loans, 214;  
 Library Department, 210-11;  
 Library of Congress depository catalogue, 212;  
 loans, 209, 212-14;  
 National Book Centre, 217;  
 Newcombe, Dr. L., librarian, 216-17;  
 outlier libraries, 206, 208;  
 regional library systems, 206-07, 208, 209;  
 statistics 215-16;  
 union catalogues, 208-09, 210, 212, 213, 217
- National Institute for Medical Research, 180
- National libraries, 38, 10-54, 92-106, 204-18
- National Register of Archives, 90
- National Union Catalogue, 208-09, 212
- NATURAL HISTORY, 11, 27-41, 157
- Natural History Museum, *see* British Museum (Natural History)
- NAVAL SCIENCE, 120
- NAVIGATION, 135
- Newcombe, Dr. L., 216
- NEWSPAPERS, 11, 17
- NUMISMATICS, 53;  
*see also* ARCHAEOLOGY
- NURSING, 180
- OCEANOGRAPHY, 30;  
*see also* GEOGRAPHY
- OCCULT SCIENCES, 131
- OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS, 21-22, 142-43;  
*see also* LEGISLATION; PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
- OPHTHALMOLOGY, 177;  
*see also* MEDICINE; SURGERY
- ORIENTAL STUDIES, 136
- ORNAMENT, 53
- ORNITHOLOGY, 29; *see also* NATURAL HISTORY; ZOOLOGY
- Osler, Sir William, 180
- Outlier libraries, 206, 207, 209-10, 213
- Outlier Union Catalogue, 209, 213
- PAINTING, 53; *see also* ART
- PALAEOGRAPHY, 131, 135; *see also* ARCHIVES; MANUSCRIPTS; PAPYRI
- PALAEONTOLOGY, 29, 36;  
*see also* GEOLOGY
- Panizzi, Sir Anthony, 10, 19
- PAPYRI, 12
- Parliament, *see* House of Commons Library;  
 House of Lords Library
- PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 107-10, 111-12, 116, 117, 118, 119, 159, 167
- Patent Office Library:  
 catalogues, 100-01;  
 classification, 101-02;  
 collections, 41, 94-96, 105;  
 deposit system, 95-96;  
 open access, 96, 102;  
 patent litigation, 105;  
 Patent Museum, 94;  
 patent search section, 96-98;  
 periodical section, 98-99;  
 photostat service, 103;  
 readers, 103-04;  
 Select Committee, 93, 94;  
 textbooks, 99
- PATENTS, 92-106
- PATHOLOGY, *see* MEDICINE; SURGERY
- PENOLOGY, 144; *see also* LAW
- PENSIONS, 122, 123
- "PER NOZZE", 157
- Petyt (William) Manuscripts, 162-63
- Pharmaceutical Society Library, 180
- PHARMACY, 180, 182
- PHILOLOGY, 129, 131;  
*see also* LITERATURE, and languages under their names
- PHILOSOPHY, 157
- PHOTOGRAPHY, 47;  
*see also* TECHNOLOGY
- PHYSIOLOGY, 177;  
*see also* ANATOMY; MEDICINE
- PLAYBILLS, 190
- Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith, 178
- Power, A. D., 143
- Preedy (John Benjamin Knowlton) Memorial Library, 131, 135
- Price (Harry) Library, 131

- PRINTING, 53, 131-32, 158  
 PRINTS (FINE ART), 52, 189  
 PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, 131  
 PSYCHOLOGY, 180;  
*see also* EDUCATION; PHILOSOPHY  
 PUBLIC HEALTH, 38, 179-80;  
*see also* HYGIENE; MEDICINE  
 Public libraries, early history, 187, 188  
 Public Record Office:  
   Canterbury Repository, 66-67;  
   contents, 61-65;  
   external activities, 89-91;  
   Library, 87-88;  
   Museum, 86-87;  
   photographic reproduction service, 84-86;  
   secretariat and staff, 88-89;  
   stock taking, 77-78;  
   terms of reference, 58-61; *see also* ARCHIVES; ARCHIVES, NATIONAL
- Quick (Robert Hebert) Memorial Library, 131
- RAILWAYS, 135; *see also* TRANSPORT  
 Rastrick (John Urpeth and Henry) Collection, 135  
 Record Commission, 58, 80  
 RECORDS, *see* ARCHIVES  
 Reference library provision, 202  
 REFORMATION, 11; *see also* HISTORY  
 REGIMENTAL HISTORIES, 119;  
*see also* MILITARY SCIENCE  
 Regional library systems, 206, 208-10, 212-13  
 Roberts, Dr. David Lloyd, 182  
 Rockefeller Foundation, 140, 179, 215, 216  
 Rothschild, Lionel Walter, *second baron*, 30  
 Rotton (Sir John) Library, 129  
 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Library, 38-40  
 Royal Collection (British Museum), 12  
 Royal College of Nursing Library, 180  
 Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 175, 183  
 Royal College of Physicians, 175, 181, 182  
 Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, Library, 179  
 Royal College of Surgeons of England Library, 41, 175, 177, 181, 182, 183  
 Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Library, 41, 180  
 Royal Courts of Justice Libraries, 166-67  
 Royal Empire Society Library, 172-73  
 Royal Entomological Society of London, 37-38  
 Royal Geographical Society, 37  
 Royal Horticultural Society, Lindley Library, 40  
 Royal Institute of International Affairs, 172  
 Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society, *see* Royal Society of Medicine  
 Royal Sanitary Institute Library, 180  
 Royal Society Library, 41  
 Royal Society of Medicine, 41, 175-76, 177, 178-79, 181  
 RUSSIA, 136, 157, 158  
 RUSSIAN LITERATURE, 136, 157  
 Russian Union Catalogue, 217  
 Rye, Reginald Arthur, 1, 3, 130
- St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College Library, 176-77, 183  
 St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School Library, 176-77  
 SANITATION, *see* HYGIENE  
 SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE, 129  
 School of Design in Ornamental Art, 48  
 Schuster (E. J.) Library, 140, 144  
 SCIENCE, 28, 42-47; *see also the branches of science under their names*  
 Science Museum Library:  
   admission, 47;  
   catalogues, 43-44, 46;  
   classification, 43-44;  
   collections, 41, 42-43, 46-47;  
   loans, 45-46;  
   periodicals, 42-43, 45;  
   photographic reproduction service, 45;  
   punched card systems, 45;  
   subject index, 44;  
   Supplementary Lending Scheme, 46

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS, 31, 32, 33-34,  
39  
SCOTLAND, 121  
Scottish Office Library, 121  
SCULPTURE, 53;  
    *see also* ARCHITECTURE; ART  
SEALS, 12, 53;  
    *see also* ARCHAEOLOGY; ARCHIVES  
SEAMANSHIP, *see* NAVAL SCIENCE;  
    NAVIGATION  
Select Committee on Arts and Manu-  
    factures, 48, 49-50  
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM, 131;  
    *see also* ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
    LITERATURE  
Shaw, Mrs. G. Bernard, 141  
Sherborn, Dr. C. D., 30  
Skeat (Walter William) Library, 129  
SLAVONIC STUDIES, 136  
Sloane, Sir Hans, 11, 28  
Sloane (Sir Hans) Collection, 12  
SMALLPOX, 182;  
    *see also* HYGIENE; MEDICINE  
SOCIAL SCIENCES, 139-49  
SOCIAL WELFARE, 122  
SOCIALISM, 144  
Society for the Bibliography of  
    Natural History, 141  
Society of Apothecaries, 182  
Soulsby, Basil H., 34  
SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 144  
SPANISH PLAYS, 157  
Standardization in borough libraries,  
    200, 202  
State Paper collections, British  
    Museum, 21-22  
STATISTICS, 143  
Sterling (Louis) Library, 131  
Stokes (Whitley) Library, 129  
Stuart, Mary F. C., 140  
Subject specialization in borough  
    libraries, 201-02  
SURGERY, 177, 182  
SURVEYING, 119  
  
TAXATION, 120, 121  
TECHNOLOGY, 42-47, 92-106, 119, 120,  
    122-23  
TEXTILES, 53  
Thane (George Dancer) Library, 177,  
    183  
THEATRICAL DESIGN, 53  
THEOLOGY, 157, 167

THESES (University of London), 134  
Thomason Tracts, 11  
*The Times*, 167, 190  
Tithe records, 90  
TOPOGRAPHY:  
    general collections, 53, 119, 157,  
        165;  
    English, 187, 189, 190; *see also*  
        ARCHIVES; GEOGRAPHY; MAPS  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, 47,  
    124  
TRADE UNIONS, 140, 143-44  
TRANSPORT, 122, 143;  
    *see also* AVIATION; RAILWAYS  
Travelling libraries, 137  
Treasury and Cabinet Offices, Com-  
    bined Library, 117-18  
Tring Museum Library, 30  
Truro (Thomas Wilde, *baron Truro*)  
    Collection, 112  
Tweeddale (Arthur Hay, *ninth*  
    *marquess of*), 29  
TYPOGRAPHY, *see* PRINTING  
  
UNESCO, 217  
Union catalogues, 136-37, 183-84, 208-  
    10, 212-13, 217  
Universal Decimal Classification, 31,  
    44, 178, 179  
University College Library, 129, 177  
University of London Library:  
    administration, 132-37;  
    building, 137;  
    catalogues, 134-35;  
    collections, 129-32;  
    finance, 132;  
    foundation of the University, 126-  
        29;  
    history, 129-32;  
    loans, 134;  
    staff, 132;  
    travelling libraries, 137  
University of London School of  
    Librarianship and Archives, 3,  
    4-5  
Unwin, Mr. and Mrs. Cobden, 140  
Unwin, Sir Stanley, 143  
  
VACCINATION, 182; *see also* MEDICINE;  
    PUBLIC HEALTH  
VETERINARY MEDICINE, 38  
Victoria and Albert Museum Library:  
    admission, 48;

- Victoria and Albert Museum Library,  
*continued:*  
 Book Production Gallery, 53 ;  
 catalogues, 50, 51 ;  
 collections, 48, 51, 52 ;  
 history, 48-50  
 VITAL STATISTICS, 121  
 Wakefield Collection, 189  
 Walsingham (George de Grey,  
*seventh baron*), 29  
 War Office Library, 119  
 WAR PENSIONS, 122  
 Webb, Sidney, 139, 140, 144  
 Wellcome, Sir Henry, 181  
 Wellcome Historical Medical Library,  
 174, 181  
 Westminster City Library, 202  
 Wheatstone (Sir Charles) Library, 129  
 Whittington, Richard, 185  
 Williams, Geoffrey, 143  
 Wills (Sir Frederick) Library, 177  
 Wilson, J. G., 143  
 Wise Collection, 11  
 Woodward, B. B., 30-31  
 WOODWORK, 53  
 Wright, Sir C. T. Hagberg, 156, 159  
 Zoological record, 31  
 Zoological Society Library, 35-36  
 ZOOLOGY, 29-41 ;  
 drawings, 31-33, 35-36, 38 ;  
 manuscripts, 12 ;  
*see also* ANATOMY ; ENTOMOLOGY ;  
 NATURAL HISTORY ; PALAEON-  
 TOLOGY ; PHYSIOLOGY





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